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Agenda items 114 and 118

REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Managing works of art in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. By its resolution 48/217 of 23 December 1993, entitled "Managing works of art in the United Nations: report of the Joint Inspection Unit", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to improve the management of works of art in such a manner as to avoid additional costs to the regular budget of the United Nations with due regard to the quality of services being provided.

2. The General Assembly also recommended the strengthening of the Arts Committee of the United Nations by obtaining the advice of local experts in honorary capacities. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the subject at its fiftieth session.

3. In that connection, the Secretary-General wishes to recall that in its report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/72, annex), the Joint Inspection Unit noted that the works of art in the United Nations shared a need for special care, conservation and protection. In view of that observation and other findings of the Inspectors and taking into account the directives of the General Assembly on the matter, the Secretary-General undertook a review of the in-house capabilities of the Secretariat to improve the management of works of art.

4. The Secretary-General has accordingly determined that responsibility for the management and care of works of art should remain within the Office of

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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda.

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ANNEX

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report describes the principal elements and role of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda in responding to the serious crisis in that country. In general, the Operation serves Rwanda by charting with its Government the long and difficult path to national reconciliation and by ensuring that human rights are fully respected at all stages of that process.

2. The Operation, as the key response of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the catastrophe that occurred in Rwanda, has to be understood against this background. From April to July 1994, Rwanda suffered the slaughter of between 500,000 and one million persons. The main victims of this extensive carnage were members of the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutus. The massive human rights violations were perpetrated in a pre-planned, organized and systematic manner by extremist Hutu militia throughout the country, and started within hours of the attack on the presidential aircraft on 6 April, which took the lives of Juvénal Habyarimana, President of the Rwandese Republic and Cyprien Ntyamira, President of the Republic of Burundi. The mass killings were condemned by all the principal organs of the United Nations, first and foremost the Security Council. The massacres were later qualified by the Commission of Experts on Rwanda 1/ in very clear and unambiguous terms as constituting "genocide" within the meaning of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

3. The ensuing civil war and atrocities perpetrated against the civilian population exacerbated the trauma, which was worsened further by the extensive destruction of the country's infrastructure. The new Government that took power in Rwanda in mid-July 1994 was able to halt the genocide. It was then faced with the immense task of restoring law and order, fostering national reconciliation and reconstructing public and economic institutions.

4. The United Nations, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights, committed to assist in this endeavour, took a multifaceted approach to this complex set of problems. It is the deep conviction of the High Commissioner that a climate of confidence and long-lasting peace can be built only upon the foundations of full respect for human rights and the rule of law. In order to achieve this, Rwanda must be supported by the sustained efforts of the international community acting through the United Nations. As this process involves the healing of deep wounds inflicted by the genocide that left no part of Rwanda untouched, a long-term engagement is required. Moreover, the system of justice has to be reconstructed from its very foundations so as to ensure that in future justice is administered fairly and impartially. The return of refugees to Rwanda and their resettlement, together with that of internally displaced persons, within the country constitute another major problem to be resolved.

II. RESPONSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE CRISIS IN RWANDA

5. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, who had assumed office only a day before the outbreak of hostilities in Rwanda, introduced a number of timely initiatives to address the crisis. He acted immediately to spur an urgent response from a wide range of United Nations agencies and mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the non-governmental organization community. On 4 May 1994, he called for the convening of an emergency session of the Commission on Human Rights to address the human rights situation in Rwanda.

6. After having visited Rwanda in May 1994, the High Commissioner urged that a special rapporteur on Rwanda be appointed to examine all the human rights aspects of the situation, including root causes and responsibilities for the atrocities. 2/ The High Commissioner also proposed that the Special Rapporteur should be supported by a field operation, staffed with specialists to investigate past human rights abuses and to monitor the ongoing situation, to deter human rights violations and to promote national reconciliation. These proposals were endorsed by the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

7. On 1 July, in its resolution 935 (1994), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to establish urgently an impartial commission of experts to examine and analyse information concerning responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda, including genocide. In his report to the Security Council of 26 July 1994, 3/ the Secretary-General stated that the Commission of Experts on Rwanda would be based in Geneva and would benefit from the resources of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and, in particular, those already made available to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva and in the field.

8. Another major development was the exodus of millions of refugees into neighbouring countries. This generated an immediate need to assist the newly established Government of Rwanda in creating the necessary conditions of law and order within a climate of confidence to encourage an early return of refugees and internally displaced persons. It was generally felt by members of the international community that a human rights field operation, one much larger than that conceived for the purposes of the Special Rapporteur and the Commission of Experts, should be put in place to facilitate repatriation and resettlement. In the absence of funding from the regular budget for an operation of this scale, the High Commissioner found it necessary to launch an appeal at the beginning of August 1994 for voluntary contributions to support this broad-based field operation. In August, he visited Rwanda again and obtained the agreement of the Government for the operation. Thus, the foundation was laid for the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda.

9. In the Agreement between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Rwanda, the Objectives and functions of the operation are defined as follows: (a) carrying out investigations into violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including possible acts of genocide; (b) monitoring the ongoing human rights situation and helping to prevent violations through the presence of human rights field officers;

(c) cooperating with other international agencies to re-establish confidence and to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and the rebuilding of civil society; and (d) implementing programmes of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, in particular in the area of the administration of justice, to help Rwanda rebuild its shattered judiciary and to provide human rights education to all levels of Rwandan society.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD OPERATION IN RWANDA: THREE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS

10. The mandate of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda takes a three-pronged approach to confidence-building with a view to eventual national reconciliation. Firstly, the Operation has carried out extensive investigations of genocide and other serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law that took place during the April to July 1994 armed conflict in Rwanda. Secondly, it has established a comprehensive presence of human rights field officers through the country to monitor the ongoing human rights situation. Thirdly, it has further initiated a broad-based programme of promotional activities in the field of human rights, ranging from projects for the rebuilding of the Rwandan administration of justice, to human rights education at different levels. Thus far, some 120 human rights field officers have been deployed. These have included experts on investigations, such as prosecutors, criminal investigators and forensic experts, as well as specialists for human rights advisory services and education. These elements of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda's activities are described in more detail below.

A. Investigating the genocide

11. From the start of the Operation, it had been recognized that the genocide investigation would have to be carried out in a professional manner and with the requisite level of expertise. Moreover, the utmost care was taken to ensure that the integrity and confidentiality of evidence were continuously maintained. In this regard, the High Commissioner took full account of the experience gained from the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which had also been preceded by the creation of a commission of experts.

12. While the desirability and feasibility of creating an international criminal court for Rwanda was in the process of being considered, special care was taken to ensure that valuable evidence would not be lost in the interim. To that end, a special investigation unit was established to gather evidence that might otherwise have been lost or destroyed, to be turned over to the Prosecutor if and when an international criminal court was brought into existence. This approach proved propitious when the Security Council took the decision on 8 November 1994 to create the International Tribunal for Rwanda (resolution 955 (1994)). It took several more months before the Tribunal could become operational and the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda continued its genocide-related investigations until the Deputy Prosecutor's Office, with its own investigations unit, was established in Kigali. Thereafter, the emphasis of the Operation's investigative work shifted to coordinating the activities of the field teams with the work of the International Tribunal.

13. While this work did not involve investigations for the direct purpose of prosecutions, it nevertheless required the highest standards of confidentiality and integrity of evidence-gathering, because of its potential probative value before a court of law. A number of Governments responded positively to the High Commissioner's request to provide specialized personnel, such as prosecutors, criminal investigators, police and forensic experts, thereby enabling the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda to collect pertinent evidence. Teams of experts provided by the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America undertook special investigations into acts of genocide, including a comprehensive survey by forensic experts of massacre and mass grave sites, interviews of surviving victims and witnesses, and the collection and preservation of documentary and other tangible evidence. A number of human rights field officers were assigned to provide assistance in this work at many stages of the investigative process, working under the guidance of the expert investigators. The Operation has also benefited from outside support that has been contributed to the investigation on an ongoing basis, in particular by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

14. All information gathered was regularly forwarded to the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who then channelled it to the Commission of Experts, the Special Rapporteur and the International Tribunal for Rwanda. The information placed before the Special Rapporteur and the Commission of Experts during 1994 was forwarded to the International Tribunal for Rwanda in January 1995. Information and evidentiary materials that were collected subsequently were again made available to the Special Rapporteur and personally handed over by the High Commissioner to the Deputy Prosecutor of the International Tribunal on 2 April 1995 in Kigali.

B. The monitoring and confidence-building process

15. Monitoring and reporting on the current human rights situation constitute essential elements of the Operation's mandate. It is important for the post-genocide rehabilitation of Rwanda that the ongoing human rights situation is closely observed, that patterns of violations are identified and immediate action taken. The Government of Rwanda fully recognizes that respect for human rights is a prerequisite for genuine confidence-building and national reconciliation and has supported the Operation's efforts in this regard.

16. Monitoring and confidence-building involve the establishment of a visible presence of human rights field officers throughout Rwanda. In accordance with the mandate of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, such activities have been conducted on a continuing basis throughout the country at the prefectural, communal and sectoral levels.

17. The monitoring and confidence-building process involves bringing to the attention of various levels of Rwandan authorities any human rights violations observed. The findings of the monitors serve as a basis for the reports of the Special Rapporteur. They are also made available by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as appropriate, to the Secretary-General, Governments, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Refugees and displaced persons

18. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda is playing an important role in the process of repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons. In this context, the Operation closely coordinates its activities with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A memorandum of understanding between UNHCR and the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda has been concluded, building on already existing cooperation, which is designed to reduce duplication of efforts as each agency seeks to implement its mandate. In deploying human rights field officers throughout the country, the Operation has taken the areas receiving the largest numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons into account. The Operation attempts to ensure that basic human rights are not violated at any stage of return, resettlement and reintegration, through monitoring of conditions at principal frontier crossing points; processing in transit centres; treatment of refugees while they await transfer to communes; treatment of those placed in interim detention; and all aspects of reintegration into home communes. In this connection, the Operation evaluates the state of readiness of home communes to determine whether they are in a position to receive returnees and assists those communes in the resettlement process. Once this process has been completed, the Operation monitors the subsequent treatment and security of resettled returnees.

Conditions of Detention

19. Another priority for the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda is the serious situation in prisons and local detention centres. At the end of October 1995, the total number of detainees exceeded 58,000. In many prisons, prisoners have been forced to stand for lack of room. There have been many deaths and serious illnesses because of the severe overcrowding.

20. The Operation makes regular visits to prisons and detention centres in order to monitor conditions and make proposals for their improvement. This work is carried out in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

21. The overcrowding of prisons is linked to the circumstances of arrest and the subsequent review of the evidence against detainees. Most of those currently detained have been arrested outside the procedures laid down in Rwandan law and there is no dossier recording the evidence against them. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda actively seeks to promote respect for legal procedures governing arrest and detention, and urges the appropriate authorities to review promptly cases where arrests appear not to be based on strong indications of criminal responsibility. While the judicial system is not yet functioning, such that criminal trials cannot commence, progress has been made regarding compliance with arrest procedure and the Government of Rwanda has established commissions de triage to review cases where detainees might be released for lack of evidence against them. The Operation has sought to promote the processing of cases by these bodies at the same time as assisting in the rehabilitation of the judicial system.

C. Promotion of human rights and efforts to rehabilitate the Rwandan justice system

22. Rwanda was left after the genocide with few judicial officials still in place and the infrastructure of the judicial system substantially destroyed. The re-establishment of the administration of justice is a requirement central to dealing with the genocide and creating confidence in communities where survivors and returning refugees must live together under the rule of law. Closely related to this is the fostering of a strong human rights culture at different levels of society.

23. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda has therefore worked to assist in the rehabilitation of the justice system at the national and local levels. The close relationship of its field teams with local judicial officials has enabled it to understand the current functioning and limitations of the system. It has thus been able to assist in channelling material assistance made available by UNDP and other donors to local needs and to encourage the gradual resumption of the functioning of the Rwandan justice system. Three legal experts have worked with the Ministry of Justice and, in cooperation with the Ministry and UNDP, the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda developed a plan to deploy 50 foreign legal experts to assist the Government in restarting all the essential functions of the judicial system, which presently suffers from an acute shortage of qualified local personnel. In September, the Government asked for the temporary suspension and re-examination of the project.

24. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda has actively promoted respect for Rwandan law and human rights standards through efforts focused on re-establishing or establishing the governmental and non-governmental institutions necessary for the protection of human rights. Seminars on arrest and detention procedures have been organized by field teams in the prefectures in conjunction with UNHCR. The Operation participates in training at the National Gendarmerie School in Ruhengeri and has prepared training seminars for the gendarmerie and the Rwandese Patriotic Army on the role of the armed forces and law enforcement officials in the protection and promotion of human rights.

25. The Operation has organized and delivered a large number of human rights seminars throughout the country. Several of these have focused specifically on the rights of women and children; others have concerned the roles of government officials and of journalists. A project for the creation of centres to provide legal and other advice to women at the commune level has been developed with local legal associations and competent ministries. The Operation has worked closely with a number of Rwandan non-governmental organizations and has promoted human rights standards and awareness through radio broadcasts, newsletters and a weekly human rights club.

IV. SERVICING OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD OPERATION IN RWANDA AND COORDINATION WITH BODIES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Servicing the Special Rapporteur

26. From the initial phase of the Operation, special efforts were made to provide the Special Rapporteur with the assistance required in the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to him by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution S-3/1 of 25 May 1994. Indeed, the High Commissioner had originally proposed that the Special Rapporteur should be assisted by a team of human rights field officers, a proposal approved by the Commission on Human Rights. A first group of five human rights officers was fielded during the period from June to August 1994. As the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda became fully operational and as the amount of information gathered by field teams increased, a coordinator for the Special Rapporteur was appointed and selected in conformity with the Special Rapporteur's wishes, and his functions form an integral part of the Office of the Chief of the Mission in Kigali. He ensures that in all activities of the Operation due regard is accorded to the mandate and reporting responsibilities of the Special Rapporteur. In Geneva, the Special Rapporteur is assisted by two Professional officers on a full-time basis.

27. All information collected by the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda is fully communicated to the Special Rapporteur and copies of those materials, including those transmitted to the International Tribunal for Rwanda, are retained in Geneva for the Special Rapporteur's exclusive use. This includes all substantive reports emanating from the field teams and all important abstracts of information produced in Kigali or Geneva.

28. In accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by the Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur has undertaken several visits to Rwanda and neighbouring States and has presented five reports on the situation of human rights in Rwanda. 4/ As is the general practice with other rapporteurs, the Special Rapporteur has received at all times the full assistance of the Centre for Human Rights staff in Geneva as well as that of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda in the preparation and conduct of and follow-up to these visits.

B. Servicing the Commission of Experts 5/

29. In the light of the continuing reports of violations of international law, including genocide in Rwanda, and recalling that all persons who commit or authorize the commission of serious violations of international humanitarian law are individually responsible for those violations and should be brought to justice, the Security Council in its resolution 935 (1994) requested, as a matter of urgency, the establishment of an impartial commission of experts to conduct an investigation into such violations committed in the territory of Rwanda and responsibility for them.

30. In accordance with the terms of reference as specified by the Security Council, the mandate of the Commission of Experts comprised reviewing and updating information available from all sources, carrying out its own investigations in Rwanda, determining individual responsibility and the applicable norms of international law and examining the feasibility of bringing perpetrators to trial, whether before a domestic or international tribunal.

31. The Commission of Experts was based in Geneva, in order to benefit from the resources of the High Commissioner and those made available to the Special Rapporteur on Rwanda. Accordingly, support and assistance to the Commission was provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights entrusted with coordinating the activities of the Commission of Experts with those of the Special Rapporteur on Rwanda. As certain of the Special Rapporteur's responsibilities, as outlined above, overlapped with the mandate of the Commission of Experts, the latter relied on the secretariat of the Centre for Human Rights for administrative support and legal expertise.

32. As is the practice with the Special Rapporteur, the information needs and field activities of the Commission of Experts were serviced extensively by the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda. Indeed, the conclusions of the Commission of Experts and the Special Rapporteur on the character and extent of the killings, and their qualification as "genocide", according to international legal norms, were based largely on the factual information provided by the Operation.

C. Coordination with the International Tribunal for Rwanda

33. In accordance with the recommendation of the Commission of Experts, the Security Council took a decision on 8 November 1994 (resolution 955 (1994)), to create the International Tribunal for Rwanda, which would have the power "to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and Rwandan citizens responsible for such violations committed in the territory of neighbouring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994", in accordance with the provisions of its Statute. 6/

34. Established under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, the International Tribunal for Rwanda has the authority to dispense justice, with Member States being bound to comply with requests for judicial assistance.

35. Subsequently, Justice Richard Goldstone was appointed Prosecutor of the Tribunal and an Office of the Deputy Prosecutor was established in Kigali.

36. Following an agreement between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Prosecutor, a large body of evidence gathered since September 1994 by the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda and its personnel was placed at the disposal of the Tribunal. The High Commissioner for Human Rights transmitted all information that had been received by the Special Rapporteur and the Commission of Experts to the Tribunal in January 1995. The High Commissioner personally handed over evidentiary materials and information collected

subsequently to the Deputy Prosecutor of the International Tribunal on 2 April 1995 in Kigali.

37. The High Commissioner had several meetings with the Prosecutor of the Tribunal during which he placed the services of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda at its disposal. The Operation continues to maintain ongoing contact and coordination with the Office of the Deputy Prosecutor with regard to all pertinent activities.

V. THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD OPERATION IN RWANDA

38. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda is the first human rights field operation to be run under the authority of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Undoubtedly, the Operation faces an enormous task, comprising not only investigation of the genocide and monitoring of the current human rights situation, but also assistance in fostering a climate of confidence so that refugees and internally displaced persons can resume their normal daily lives in Rwanda. Given the fact that Rwanda has been ravaged by the genocide and armed conflict in which systematic and gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were perpetrated, the challenges of the rehabilitation effort remain daunting.

39. The Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda has made a significant contribution to human rights protection and promotion in Rwanda through its investigation of the 1994 genocide, monitoring of the current human rights situation, including the process of repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home communes, as well as efforts to rehabilitate the Rwandan justice system.

40. From the very beginning, the Operation has been financed mostly from voluntary contributions. As at 3 November 1995, $17,787,341 had been pledged and $7,276,859 received. A statement of pledges and contributions is contained in the appendix to the present report. It is anticipated that expenditures for 1994-1995 will amount to $11 million. For 1996, it is estimated that the Operation would need some $9 million.

41. The timing and receipt of voluntary contributions have placed constraints that have hampered and continue to hamper the implementation of the Operation.

42. Laying the groundwork for national reconciliation requires sustained efforts on the part of the Operation through steady cooperation with the Government of Rwanda. Working with the local authorities and officials of the Government of Rwanda therefore implies maintenance of ongoing relationships between human rights field officers specifically assigned to carry out those tasks.

43. The absence of more stable and long-term funding has made this kind of liaison and cooperation more difficult to implement. It has also complicated efforts at more effective and systematic human rights monitoring and reporting. Coordination between the Operation and other international organizations has also been made more difficult.

44. The difficulties lie in the inability to attract and retain qualified personnel for positions whose funding is on such a precarious and unpredictable basis.

45. There are two particularly crucial phases that will occupy the resources and concentration of the Operation in the coming months: the more immediate phase determined by the major refugee return to Rwanda, in particular from Zaire, and a medium-term phase during which the Rwandan administration of justice (in itself critical to alleviation of the acutely overcrowded conditions of detention) must be rehabilitated and human rights protection developed.

46. As regards the first phase, the Operation should maintain the maximum presence possible on the ground for the time covering the main period of refugee return. This will be a precarious period for the human rights situation and, by extension, for peace and security in the region. The safe and orderly return movement up to the present point has been assisted by the efforts of the Operation acting in close cooperation with UNHCR.

47. As regards the second phase, it may be possible to scale down the presence of human rights field officers once the potentially volatile situation surrounding the major return movement has subsided. At that stage, the emphasis could shift from monitoring human rights conditions surrounding the return movement (which it is hoped will have diminished in scale as the majority of refugees are successfully resettled and reintegrated into their home communes) towards continuous efforts to improve the administration of justice. Those efforts, supported by ongoing human rights monitoring, will need to be continued at least through 1996.

Notes

1/ This body was established by the Security Council on 1 July 1994 to determine individual responsibility for serious breaches of human rights and humanitarian law. Following completion of its work and submission of its reports to the Secretary-General, it was dissolved on 30 November 1994.

2/ E/CN.4/S-3/3.

3/ S/1994/879.

4/ E/CN.4/1995/7 and Corr.1, E/CN.4/1995/12, E/CN.4/1995/70, E/CN.4/1995/71 and E/CN.4/1996/7.

5/ The full name of the Commission is Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 935 (1994) to Examine and Analyse the Grave Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Rwanda, including Possible Acts of Genocide.

6/ The full name of the Tribunal is International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwanda Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States Between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

APPENDIX

Statement of pledges and contributions as at 3 November 1995

Donor	Currency and amount	Equivalent in United States dollars	Payment effected	Other services provided and remarks
General pledges and contributions				
Australia	$A 100 000	63 500.00	73 690.00	
	$A 200 000	146 000.00	145 800.00	
Austria	S 500 000	45 000.00	46 643.97	
Belgium	BF 15 000 000	465 800.00	523 098.52	
Canada	CAN$ 100 000	68 376.00	66 500.00	
Denmark	US$ 100 000	100 000.00	100 000.00	
Finland	Fmk 400 000	75 600.00	83 267.41	Plus one investigator for one and one half months
France	FF 1 200 000	233 100.00	190 476.19	
			40 899.80	
Germany	DM 314 704	201 700.00	119 949.36	Plus office building in Kigali
			93 126.28	
	DM 500 000	352 112.00		Contribution pending
Ireland	£Ir 50 000	79 500.00	79 547.71	
	£Ir 50 000	76 923.00	80 930.00	
Israel	US$ 10 000	10 000.00	10 000.00	
Japan	US$ 500 000	500 000.00	500 000.00	
Liechtenstein	Sw F 10 000	8 771.93	8 771.93	
Luxembourg	Lux F 550 000	17 000.00	16 791.67	
Netherlands	f. 75 000	42 600.00	44 640.00	Plus one prosecutor, one forensic expert and three criminal investigators for three months
	f. 1 350 000	798 800.00	764 439.41	
New Zealand	$NZ 50 000	29 600.00	29 597.74	
Norway	NKr 700 000	101 700.00	105 616.55	Plus two procurement experts and two criminal investigators for three months

Donor	Currency and amount	Equivalent in United States dollars	Payment effected	Other services provided and remarks
Spain	US$ 9 880	9 880.00	9 880.00	Plus two forensic experts for two months and one prosecutor for one month
	US$ 208 000	208 000.00		For eight UNVs for six months
	US$ 150 000	150 000.00		For additional UNVs
Sweden	SKr 1 000 000	129 500.00	137 631.25	
Switzerland	Sw F 100 000	75 758.00	75 757.58	Plus one criminal investigator for nine months
	Sw F 150 000	113 636.00	113 636.36	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	£ 250 000	383 200.00	383 155.00	Plus four vehicles in Kigali
	£ 2 000 000	3 200 000.00	3 223 000.00	
United States of America	US$ 750 000	750 000.00	Payment made to UNDP	For 25 UNVs for six months
	US$ 50 000	50 000.00	50 000.00	Plus five criminal investigators for three weeks and airlift of vehicles from Kuwait to Kigali
	US$ 1 000 000	1 000 000.00		Contribution pending
European Union	ECU 6 060 000	7 790 884.33		Contribution consists in provision of fully equipped officers
UNDP	US$ 250 000	250 000.00		For recruitment of UNVs
ACCT	US$ 180 000	180 000.00	159 617.65	Balance contribution pending
OXFAM	£ 50 000	80 000.00		Three vehicles provided in Kigali
Individuals	FF 1 000 + US$ 200	400.00	395.31	
Total		17 787 341.26	7 276 859.69	
Pledges and contributions for the technical assistance programme in Rwanda				
Italy	L 2 000 000 000	123 333.00	123 333.00	

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Agenda item 165

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 49/161 of 23 December 1994. It provides an overview of the provisions and recommendations for action contained in the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by consensus by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. The report focuses, in particular, on those recommendations which have immediate implications for action at the international level, including those requiring consideration by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

95-34993 (E) 131195 141195

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CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 10	3
II.	FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN	11 - 92	4
	A. Response of the international community and the United Nations system	11 - 30	4
	B. Specific provisions of the Platform for Action relating to follow-up	31 - 92	9
	1. National level	31 - 33	9
	2. Regional/subregional level	34 - 36	9
	3. International level	37 - 92	10
	(a) General Assembly	39 - 40	10
	(b) Economic and Social Council	41 - 44	11
	(c) Commission on the Status of Women	45 - 47	11
	(d) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	48 - 49	12
	(e) Role of the Secretary-General	50 - 61	12
	(f) United Nations Secretariat	62 - 75	15
	(g) United Nations Development Fund for Women	76 - 78	19
	(h) International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	79 - 80	19
	(i) Other organizations of the United Nations system	81 - 89	20
	(j) Non-governmental organizations	90 - 92	22
III.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTIETH SESSION	93	23

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/161 of 23 December 1994, requested the Secretary-General to prepare for consideration by the Assembly at its fiftieth session a report on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. The present report is being submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with that request. The report of the Fourth World Conference on Women is currently before the Assembly. 1/

2. The General Assembly's decision, in its resolution 45/129 of 14 December 1990, to convene a Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 was adopted against the background of a strong concern, reflected in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/12, 1990/14 and 1990/15, at the pace of implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 2/ in particular with regard to the objectives of ensuring equality for women, promoting their integration in development and advancing their participation in efforts to promote peace. The themes of the United Nations Decade for Women - equality, development and peace - were also chosen as the themes of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

3. In its resolution 47/95 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly accepted with appreciation the offer of the Government of China to host the Conference.

4. The Conference was attended by 17,000 representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and the media. Over 30,000 participants attended a parallel forum organized by non-governmental organizations at Huairou.

5. The Commission on the Status of Women served as the preparatory committee for the Conference and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat served as the secretariat of the Conference; Mrs. Gertrude Mongella was appointed as its Secretary-General.

6. The preparatory activities for the Conference were characterized by intense collaboration among Governments, the Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, and by the unprecedented involvement and strong support of other intergovernmental organizations and an extremely broad spectrum of non-governmental actors at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

7. Activities at the national level were wide-ranging and included the preparation of national reports on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Such reports were submitted by 165 Member and Observer States. Several countries also convened national meetings and/or set up national preparatory committees.

8. Each of the five regional commissions of the United Nations convened a regional preparatory meeting. These meetings, which were held at Jakarta, Vienna, Mar del Plata, Argentina, Dakar and Amman, resulted in regional plans or programmes of action that provided regional perspectives for the Platform for

Action. Consultations organized with representatives of youth organizations at each regional meeting resulted in youth statements on the Platform for Action and further mobilization of youth activities at national and regional level.

9. Support for the Conference at the international level was furthered by the establishment by the Secretary-General of an Advisory Group composed of 19 eminent persons. The Group met three times prior to the Conference. It provided valuable advice to the Secretary-General and assisted in mobilizing political interest and public attention for the Conference.

10. A Trust Fund, to which a number of Member States and other donors contributed generously, augmented the resources available from the regular budget for the preparatory work.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

A. Response of the international community and the United Nations system

11. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 3/ were adopted by consensus on 15 September 1995 by 189 Governments. The Declaration embodies the commitment of the international community to advance the goals of equality, development and peace and to implement the Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes. The Platform for Action sets out measures for national and international action for the advancement of women.

12. The Fourth World Conference on Women was a conference of commitment. During the Conference, Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental bodies made specific commitments to implement the goals and objectives of the Conference. Those commitments must be sustained and translated into concrete policies and actions.

13. The Conference brought together the cross-cutting issues of development, equality and peace, and analysed them from a gender perspective. It defined an agenda for action to empower women in the social, political and economic spheres, in both private and public life, and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. It emphasized the connection between advancement of women and progress for society as a whole. It reaffirmed clearly that societal issues must be addressed from a gender perspective in order to ensure sustainable development. This agenda, and the approaches it embodies, must guide follow-up action at all levels.

14. As agreed in Beijing, the set of actions set out in the Platform for Action "should lead to fundamental change". To that end "immediate action and accountability are essential if the targets are to be met by the year 2000. Implementation is primarily the responsibility of Governments, but is also dependent on a wide range of institutions in the public, private and non-governmental sectors at the community, national, subregional/regional and international levels" (para. 286).

15. The overriding message of the Fourth World Conference on Women was that the issues addressed in the Platform for Action are global and universal. Deeply entrenched attitudes and practices perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women, in public and private life, in all parts of the world. Accordingly, implementation will require changes in values, attitudes, practices and priorities at the national, regional and international levels. A clear commitment to international norms and standards of equality between men and women, and measures to protect and promote the human rights of women and girl children as an integral part of universal human rights must underlie all action. Institutions at all levels must be reoriented to expedite implementation. An active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective should be promoted by Governments, the United Nations system and all other relevant organizations.

16. National-level action and supporting action at the international and regional levels should be focused on the 12 critical areas of concern addressed by the Platform for Action (see chap. IV):

(a) The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;

(b) Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training;

(c) Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services;

(d) Violence against women;

(e) The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation;

(f) Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources;

(g) Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels;

(h) Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women;

(i) Lack of respect for, and inadequate promotion and protection of, the human rights of women;

(j) Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media;

(k) Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment;

(l) Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.

17. Effective action will require the broadest possible cooperation. As indicated in paragraph 306:

> "The Platform for Action needs to be implemented through the work of all bodies and organizations of the United Nations system during the period 1995-2000, specifically and as an integral part of wider programming. An enhanced framework for international cooperation for gender issues must be developed ... in order to ensure the integrated and comprehensive implementation, follow-up and assessment of the Platform for Action, taking into account the results of global United Nations summits and conferences. The fact that at all of these summits and conferences, Governments have committed themselves to the empowerment of women in different areas, makes coordination crucial to the follow-up strategies for this Platform for Action. The Agenda for Development and the Agenda for Peace should take into account the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women."

18. The Platform for Action further states (para. 307) that "the institutional capacity of the United Nations system to carry out and coordinate its responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, as well as its expertise and working methods to promote the advancement of women, should be improved" and that "responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Platform for Action and the integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system must rest at the highest levels" (para. 308).

19. The Secretary-General is in agreement with the Conference's conclusion that "to improve the system's efficiency and effectiveness in providing support for equality and women's empowerment at the national level and to enhance its capacity to achieve the objectives of the Platform for Action, there is a need to renew, reform and revitalize various parts of the United Nations system" (para 309). At the level of the United Nations and its agencies, the strengthening of the capacity of the system to support an integrated, effective follow-up to the Fourth World Conference as part of the overall effort to ensure the coordinated implementation of the results of the series of recent global conferences should be a key objective in pursuing further the ongoing reform process.

20. There must be a new unity of purpose and action in the Organization and the system as a whole contributing to the provision of effective, coordinated support for national action; coherent support for policy-making by the concerned intergovernmental bodies to further the key role of the Organization in respect of standard-setting, policy coordination and advocacy; mutual feedback and reinforcement between national and international action; and effective mainstreaming that ensures that the gender dimension is fully integrated in all aspects of the work of the United Nations.

21. In accordance with chapters V and VI of the Platform for Action, effective implementation of the Conference recommendations will require that existing machinery and institutions sharpen their focus, set clear priorities for action, evaluation and coordination, establish accountability mechanisms and use available resources efficiently.

22. Against this background, the Secretary-General intends to pursue vigorously his efforts to create a stronger, better coordinated programme for the advancement of women. In this regard a key new role will be played by his Senior Adviser (see paras. 54-57 below) and, at the system-wide level, by the proposed Administrative Committee on Coordination task force (see paras. 53 and 89 below).

23. Within the United Nations itself, the requirements from the Platform for Action have given added force to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/111 of 20 December 1993, in which it urged that interaction between the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women be reviewed and rationalized within the context of ongoing efforts to revitalize the Economic and Social Council in pursuance of a stronger, more unified programme for the advancement of women.

24. Accordingly, the Secretary-General will review the different United Nations mechanisms for the advancement of women with a view to making them more mutually supportive and effective, eliminating any duplication and ensuring that the essential linkages are strengthened between the standard-setting and normative work of the Organization and operational activities. A key element of this review and, more generally, a central objective of the overall reform process, should be the enhancement of the capacity of the Organization in support of global policy-making and mainstreaming, mobilizing in a coordinated way the contributions of all parts of the Organization and the system. The Secretary-General will be guided, inter alia, by the Platform of Action, which envisages "reviewing and strengthening the strategies and working methods of different United Nations mechanisms for the advancement of women with a view to rationalizing and, as appropriate, strengthening their advisory, catalytic and monitoring functions in relation to mainstream bodies and agencies. Women/gender units are important for effective mainstreaming, but strategies must be further developed to prevent inadvertent marginalization as opposed to mainstreaming of the gender dimension throughout all operations" (para. 309).

25. The capacity of UNIFEM to provide effective operational support for follow-up action at the national level and to exercise a catalytic role in promoting an effective inter-agency coordination at the country level, through the resident coordinator system, and in bringing country-level experience to bear on relevant aspects of the work of the system at the global level will need to be fully utilized.

26. Proposals for strengthening the research and training capacity of the Organization in pursuance of a stronger, more unified programme for the advancement of women, as outlined in successive reports of the Secretary-General (E/1993/82, A/48/591 and A/49/365-E/1994/119), are already before the General Assembly. They require further consideration pursuant to the relevant Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions on the merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM. The objectives embodied in those resolutions should be actively pursued as an integral part of the effort to enhance the capacity of the Organization to promote a coherent and sustained follow-up to the Conference.

27. Enhancing coordination and improving the substantive services provided to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other relevant bodies is another critical objective. The Division for the Advancement of Women has a key responsibility in this regard in support of global policy-making and mainstreaming.

28. The decisions to be taken by the General Assembly at its current session, including on the role and support requirements of the Commission on the Status of Women and other relevant bodies, and subsequent deliberations in those bodies should further the process of renewal, reform and revitalization referred to in paragraph 309 of the Platform for Action. In that light, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the chairpersons of these bodies and drawing on the advice of the proposed high-level board referred to in paragraph 61 below, will submit a further report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on ways to enhance the capacity of the Organization to support the ongoing follow-up to the Conference in the most integrated and effective way.

29. The mobilization of adequate resources is another key requirement for the effective implementation of the Platform for Action. The Conference made a strong call for such global mobilization. As stated in paragraph 345:

> "To implement the Platform for Action, funding will need to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors. The reformulation of policies and reallocation of resources may be needed within and among programmes, but some policy changes may not necessarily have financial implications. Mobilization of additional resources both public and private, including resources from innovative sources of funding, may also be necessary."

In paragraph 361 there is a call for effective and efficient use of funds by the United Nations system in its efforts to promote the advancement of women and to enhance its capacity to further the objectives of the Platform for Action. The Platform underlines the need "to renew, reform and revitalize various parts of the United Nations system" and to allocate "additional resources from within the United Nations regular budget in order to implement the Platform for Action". It further states (para. 310):

> "In following up the Fourth World Conference on Women, all entities of the United Nations system focusing on the advancement of women should have the necessary resources and support to carry out follow-up activities. The efforts of gender focal points within organizations should be well integrated into overall policy, planning, programming and budgeting."

30. The following paragraphs recall specific provisions of the Platform for Action concerning follow-up, focusing on the recommendations in its chapters V and VI, and immediate actions required to initiate their implementation. Follow-up by the United Nations system as a whole will be covered in greater detail in future reports to the General Assembly and other concerned intergovernmental bodies, including through the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001. 4/

B. Specific provisions of the Platform for Action relating to follow-up

1. National level

31. Governments, according to paragraph 293 of the Platform for Action, "have the primary responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action". Governments are called upon "to take a leading role in coordinating, monitoring and assessing progress in the advancement of women". Governments, with financial and advisory assistance from regional and international organizations (para. 300), are called upon (para. 296) "to establish or improve the effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women at the highest political level, appropriate intra- and inter-ministerial procedures and staffing, and other institutions with the mandate and capacity to broaden women's participation and integrate gender analysis into policies and programmes".

32. In paragraph 297 Governments are called upon to begin as soon as possible to develop implementation strategies for the Platform for Action, preferably by the end of 1995, with a view to completion by the end of 1996. National planning should be broad-based and participatory, comprehensive and time-bound, and should include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation.

33. The United Nations resident coordinators at the country level will have a key role in assisting Governments in these efforts (para. 341).

2. Regional/subregional level

34. In its paragraphs 301-305, 351 and 352, the Platform for Action recommends actions to be taken at the regional and subregional levels. The regional commissions of the United Nations and other subregional/regional structures are called upon to promote and assist national institutions in monitoring and implementing the global Platform for Action within their mandates. This should be done, according to paragraph 301, "in coordination with the implementation of the respective regional platforms or plans of action and in close collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women, taking into account the need for a coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences in the economic, social, human rights and related fields".

35. In order to facilitate regional implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as called for in paragraph 302, the Economic and Social Council should "consider reviewing the institutional capacity of the United Nations regional commissions within their mandates, including their women's focal points/units, to deal with gender issues in the light of the Platform for Action, as well as the regional platforms or plans of action. Consideration should be given, inter alia, and, where appropriate, to strengthening capacity in this respect". The Platform also calls for regular coordination by United Nations agencies and bodies at the regional level in relation to technical assistance and operational activities (para. 304).

36. The Secretary-General will make every effort to strengthen the gender dimension in all the activities of the regional commissions and to ensure that their capacities are fully utilized to follow up the Platform for Action, and to assist in the coordination of relevant activities by United Nations organizations, including the development of concerted action programmes in support of the objectives of the Conference at the regional level.

3. International level

37. In section C of chapter V the Platform for Action contains detailed recommendations on the responsibilities to be exercised by the United Nations intergovernmental machinery in respect of the follow-up to the Conference. It places special emphasis on its role in promoting the development of an enhanced framework for international cooperation for gender issues and the comprehensive implementation of the Platform, integrating the results of other global United Nations conferences.

38. With respect to the United Nations system, the Platform for Action calls for the integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes through mainstreaming actions and stresses that responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Platform must rest at the highest level. Accordingly, the Secretary-General will propose to the Administrative Committee on Coordination the establishment of an inter-agency task force on the empowerment and the advancement of women. This task force will be an integral part of the arrangements being established under the aegis of the Administrative Committee for the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences (see also paras. 53 and 89 below). In paragraph 336, the Platform recommends that each organization set out the specific actions it will undertake, including goals and targets to realign priorities and redirect resources to meet the global priorities identified in the Platform for Action, with clear delineation of responsibility and accountability. These new orientations should be reflected in the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001. 4/ The Secretary-General will ensure that this task is given priority attention.

(a) General Assembly

39. In paragraph 312 the Platform for Action points out that the General Assembly "is the principal policy-making and appraisal organ on matters relating to the follow-up to the Conference, and as such should integrate gender issues throughout its work", recognizing that these issues cut across social, political and economic policy. The General Assembly is invited "to include the follow-up to the Conference as part of its continuing work on advancement of women" and to review its implementation in 1996, 1998 and 2000.

40. As part of the ongoing rationalization of the work of the General Assembly, care must be taken to ensure that the advancement of women remains a major focus, and that the gender dimension is fully integrated in the consideration of all issues before it, including those relating to peace and security.

(b) Economic and Social Council

41. According to paragraphs 313 to 316 of the Platform for Action, the Economic and Social Council should oversee system-wide coordination of implementation of the Platform and make recommendations in this regard. It should review the implementation of the Platform giving due consideration to reports of the Commission on the Status of Women.

42. The Platform recommends that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council review and strengthen the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women taking into account the need for effective coordination with other related commissions and Conference follow-up.

> "The Council should incorporate gender issues into its discussion of all policy questions, giving due consideration to recommendations prepared by the Commission. It should consider dedicating at least one high-level segment before the year 2000 to the advancement of women ... with active ... participation ... of the specialized agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund." (para. 313)

The Council is also requested to consider dedicating at least one coordination segment before the year 2000 to coordination of the advancement of women, based on the system-wide medium-term plan, 4/ and one operational activities segment to the coordination of development activities related to gender (paras. 314 and 315).

43. In paragraph 321 the Platform for Action calls upon other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to "take due account of the Platform for Action and ensure the integration of gender aspects in their respective work".

44. The recommendations on the Economic and Social Council in the Platform for Action should be seen in the light of efforts to coordinate the follow-up to recent global conferences, taking into consideration the importance of mainstreaming gender issues, on the one hand, and ensuring continuing attention to the specific measures required to ensure the advancement of women, on the other. At its substantive session of 1995 the Council decided that, each year, within the framework of its coordination segment, it would carry out a review of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or contribute to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a given conference.

(c) Commission on the Status of Women

45. The Commission on the Status of Women has been assisting the Economic and Social Council on issues relating to the advancement of women since 1946. The Platform for Action makes recommendations on the role of the Commission in paragraphs 317 to 320. It calls for a review and strengthening of the Commission's mandate, taking into account, inter alia, the need for synergy with other functional commissions. It states that the Commission should have a central role, within the United Nations system, in monitoring the implementation of the Platform and in assisting the Council in coordination of reporting on

implementation. It notes the need for the allocation of sufficient resources in support of the Commission.

46. The Platform for Action calls upon the Commission, in developing its work programme for the period 1996-2000, to "review the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and consider how to integrate in its agenda the follow-up to the World Conference on Women. In this context, the Commission ... should consider how it could further develop its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities" (para. 320). The follow-up to the Conference is already included in the provisional agenda of the Commission for its fortieth session, in 1996.

47. The Secretary-General intends to put forward proposals to the Commission at its next session to assist the Commission in developing its work programme to follow up the Platform for Action, including with respect to monitoring implementation of the recommendations in the Platform at all levels, and in enhancing its role in the coordinated follow-up to the continuum of conferences, taking into consideration related intergovernmental and inter-agency follow-up processes.

(d) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

48. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was established in 1981 to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is a treaty body devoted specifically to the rights of women. The Platform for Action underscores its important role in securing enjoyment by women of their human rights. In paragraph 324 the Platform states that the ability of the Committee to monitor implementation of the Convention should be strengthened "through the provision of human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations, including expert legal assistance and ... sufficient meeting time for the Committee" in keeping with the decision made by the meeting of the States parties in May 1995. It also calls for the Committee to "increase its coordination with other human rights treaty bodies, taking into account the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action". 5/

49. The Secretary-General will make every effort to provide coordinated secretariat support to the Committee, bearing in mind that the promotion of the enjoyment by women of their human rights is central to the overall effort for the advancement of the status of women. The Committee is expected to consider the implications for its work of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women at its fifteenth session, in January 1996.

(e) Role of the Secretary-General

50. The Secretary-General is strongly committed to assuming "responsibility for coordination of policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Platform for Action and for the mainstreaming of a system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the United Nations", as requested in paragraph 326 of the Platform for Action.

51. In his statement to the closing session of the Conference, the Secretary-General indicated that he would ensure that the recommendations addressed to him were implemented swiftly and effectively, and that he was committed to integrating the gender perspective into all aspects of the work of the Organization. He added that he would work with his colleagues, the executive heads of the United Nations specialized agencies and the United Nations programmes and funds to ensure a coordinated system-wide response, integrating the follow-up of this Conference with that of other global conferences.

52. The Secretary-General welcomes the emphasis on policy coordination and mainstreaming in paragraph 326. These requirements were a major consideration in the restructuring of the economic and social sectors and, in particular, in the location of the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. In the same context, the Secretary-General requested the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist him in ensuring policy coherence and coordination of operational activities. These requirements will continue to guide the Secretary-General in integrating the gender dimension in the programme management and human resource development strategies of the Organization and in ensuring a coordinated follow-up within the United Nations to recent global conferences, all of which have addressed the advancement of women as a central issue.

53. In relation to the system as a whole, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, the Administrative Committee on Coordination, at its first session for 1995, adopted a comprehensive statement reaffirming the strong commitment of executive heads to ensuring that the advancement of women is a policy priority within the organizations of the common system and to taking the necessary action to improve the status of women in their respective secretariats. At its most recent session, on 12 and 13 October 1995, the Administrative Committee on Coordination agreed that the gender perspective must be fully integrated into the work of the inter-agency task forces, under lead agency arrangements, which will follow up recent global conferences on the basis of cross-sectoral themes (see para. 89 below). As the Platform for Action encompasses but goes well beyond these themes, the Administrative Committee also decided to consider, following the current session of the General Assembly, the best means of promoting sustained and coordinated follow-up to the Platform, and of ensuring that the improvement of the status of women in all its aspects is placed in the mainstream of the work of the system.

54. The Secretary-General has given careful consideration in this context to the invitation "to establish a high-level post in the Office of the Secretary-General, using existing human and financial resources, to act as [his] adviser on gender issues and to help ensure system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action in close cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women" (para. 326).

55. The Secretary-General is strongly of the view that, for effective mainstreaming, all organizational entities must exercise their line responsibilities for implementing relevant recommendations in the Platform for Action, without duplication. In this light, and in view of ongoing efforts to

streamline high-level posts and to avoid additional managerial layers, the Secretary-General does not consider it appropriate to request an appropriation for an additional high-level post and related requirements at the present time.

56. Using existing human and financial resources, the Secretary-General would propose to integrate the functions referred to in paragraph 54 above into the portfolio of one of his Senior Advisers in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Senior Adviser to the Secretary-General would not have line responsibilities or duplicate the work of units working on issues relating to the advancement of women. Rather, the Senior Adviser would have a role of overview and coordination, assisting the Secretary-General to ensure that the gender perspective is integrated into overall policy-making and programming, including in the political area, and is taken into account in all aspects of the work of the system and in furthering the Organization's linkages with civil society. The Secretary-General will propose that his Senior Adviser chair, in this capacity, the Administrative Committee on Coordination task force referred to in paragraph 89 below. Within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, this senior official would also ensure that all statements and reports emanating from the Secretary-General are gender-sensitive. The Senior Adviser would also serve as a spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the above matters.

57. The Senior Adviser would draw upon the expertise and assistance of all existing entities working in this area, including the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as well as UNIFEM, INSTRAW, the Focal Point on Women in the Department of Administration and Management and other concerned units within United Nations departments, funds and programmes.

58. As part of the effort to broaden participation and strengthen accountability, as well as to integrate effectively the gender dimension in the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General is requesting all United Nations departments and offices to review their programmes to determine how they can contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. The Secretary-General will also ensure that the gender dimension is fully integrated in the perspective of the next medium-term plan, for the period 1998-2001.

59. Likewise, with respect to the status of women within the United Nations itself, the Secretary-General will pursue his efforts to integrate the measures in his strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) (see A/49/587 and Corr.1) within his overall human resources management strategy for the Organization as a whole. He intends to hold all programme managers accountable for implementation.

60. The participatory and inclusive character of the preparatory process and of the Conference itself was a key element in its success. The Secretary-General believes it essential that the follow-up to the Conference should also be as broadly based as possible. In particular, he considers it important that the expectations and concerns of major constituencies and groups on gender-related issues should be fully taken into account in implementing the Platform for Action, within the United Nations as well as the system as a whole.

61. To that end, the Secretary-General proposes to establish a high-level board on the advancement of women to advise him on the follow-up to the Conference. The board, which would consist of 15 to 20 eminent persons representing a broad range of experience and disciplines, would contribute to the building and strengthening of partnerships between the United Nations and major constituencies on gender-related issues; assist the Secretary-General and his Senior Adviser in promoting knowledge and understanding of, and mobilizing support for, United Nations activities for the advancement of women in general and the follow-up to the Conference in particular; and bring to the attention of the Secretary-General and, through him, to concerned intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies, emerging issues related to the implementation of the Platform for Action, and ways and means of addressing them. The Secretary-General trusts that the Board will be a source of innovative ideas and approaches in the follow-up to the Conference, and a source of strong support to the Organization in its efforts to improve the status of women.

(f) United Nations Secretariat

(i) Division for the Advancement of Women

62. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development is the principal unit within the United Nations Secretariat dealing with issues relating to the improvement of the status of women. The placement of the Division within the Department by the Secretary-General during the restructuring of the economic and social sectors was aimed at ensuring the integration of gender issues in policy formulation and coordination, including the servicing of the intergovernmental machinery. Effective substantive support of the intergovernmental machinery, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, will require the involvement and cooperation of all organizations of the United Nations system, including in particular UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

63. In paragraphs 327 and 328 the Platform for Action notes that:

> "The primary function of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development is to provide substantive servicing to the Commission on the Status of Women and other intergovernmental bodies when they are concerned with the advancement of women, as well as to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. It has been designated focal point for the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies."

The Platform states (para. 328):

> "The Division should examine the obstacles to the advancement of women through the application of gender-impact analysis in policy studies for the Commission on the Status of Women and through support to other subsidiary bodies. After the Fourth World Conference on Women it should play a coordinating role in preparing the revision of the system-wide medium-term plan ... 1996-2001 and should continue serving as the secretariat for inter-agency coordination for the advancement of women. It should continue to maintain a flow of information with national commissions, national

institutions for the advancement of women and non-governmental organizations with regard to the implementation of the Platform for Action."

The Platform requests the Secretary-General "to ensure more effective functioning of the Division by, inter alia, providing sufficient human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations" (para. 327).

64. As indicated above, the Division for the Advancement of Women will have a key role to play with respect to the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference, in support of the work of the intergovernmental machinery, of the organizations of the United Nations system and of other actors in the implementation of the Platform for Action and in promoting the integration of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes. There are, in particular, three areas in which the reinforcement of the Division is called for in order to enable it to carry out its new and expanded functions, in collaboration with other parts of the Secretariat and system, namely, capacity for gender analysis; the advancement of human rights of women; and the promotion of a system-wide approach to the implementation of the Platform, including outreach activities.

65. Gender-impact analysis of United Nations policies and programmes - a major prerequisite for mainstreaming - requires review of, interaction with and input into, a wide range of activities in all areas covered by the Organization. Pursuant to paragraph 328 of the Platform for Action and to respond to follow-up action by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, the Division will, in particular, need to enhance its capacity to conduct and coordinate studies, applying gender impact analysis, to examine relationships between the advancement of women and other global issues dealt with by the United Nations and ways and means of promoting consistency and coherence in mainstreaming the gender dimension throughout the Organization. In addition to policy studies for the Commission on the Status of Women, outputs will include recommendations to the Secretary-General, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, as appropriate, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

66. The role of the Division for the Advancement of Women in ensuring that the overall regime of protection of the human rights of women is strengthened is stressed in both the Platform for Action and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. 5/ This implies a broader role in providing gender-based information to various human rights treaty bodies, as well as in taking steps "to ensure that the human rights activities of the United Nations regularly address violations of women's human rights, including gender-specific abuses". 6/ In view of the importance accorded to the elimination of violence against women by the Platform for Action and previous intergovernmental decisions - including, inter alia, resolution 39/5 of the Commission on the Status of Women - the Division, together with other relevant United Nations bodies, will be called upon to provide enhanced support to the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and to assist in monitoring implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (see General Assembly resolution 48/104). In this regard, the Division will need to develop its database on the subject. In addition, the Division will be required to

support the Commission on the Status of Women in relation to the communications procedure (Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/11) and in pursuing the proposal in the Platform for Action to elaborate a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the right to petition.

67. A third area relates to inter-agency coordination and the monitoring of intergovernmental decisions concerning the implementation of the Platform for Action, in support of the coordinating and monitoring roles of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, and to accompanying outreach activities with entities outside the system. A decentralized model of implementation places a high premium on monitoring as a means of maintaining consistency and avoiding duplication of effort at all levels. Given the scope and diversity of the Platform for Action, the Division will need, in the exercise of its functions, to interact with a wider range and larger number of institutions and actors than in the past. It will play a central role in developing further the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 4/ which will need to reflect new methodologies and concepts.

68. The number of non-governmental organizations involved in the Conference and in the parallel NGO Forum was unprecedented. The process of mobilizing this vast and diverse support for the advancement of women will require considerable expansion of the Division's outreach capacity, including through publications, increased use of new information technologies, support for dissemination of information through mass media and women's networks, advisory services and database and network linkages.

69. The programme activities and the related resource requirements resulting from the new orientations and additional responsibilities outlined above were not included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, 7/ before the General Assembly at the present session, which specifically provides for revision on the basis of the outcome of the Conference. A separate statement will be submitted in this regard.

(ii) Other units of the United Nations Secretariat referred to in the Platform for Action

70. The Platform for Action recommends (para. 331) that the Office of Human Resources Management:

> "... continue to accord priority to the recruitment and promotion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, particularly in senior policy-level and decision-making posts, in order to achieve the goals set out in General Assembly resolutions 45/125 and 45/239 C and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolutions 46/100, 47/93, 48/106 and 49/167. The training service should design and conduct regular gender-sensitivity training or include gender-sensitivity training in all of its activities."

71. The General Assembly has before it at its present session a separate report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/50/691), which addresses the requirements referred to above, including plans to reach the target of 50 per cent women by the year 2000 and

developments in the area of training. Gender-equality issues will also be addressed in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 in the context of the Secretary-General's overall strategy for human resource management, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/222 B of 20 July 1995. Implementation of the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) (see A/49/587 and Corr.1) will be monitored closely.

72. The Platform for Action further states

> "The Department of Public Information should seek to integrate a gender perspective in its general information activities and, within existing resources, strengthen and improve its programmes on women and the girl child. To this end, the Department should formulate a multimedia communications strategy to support the implementation of the Platform for Action, taking new technology fully into account. Regular outputs of the Department should promote the goals of the Platform, particularly in developing countries." (para. 332)

73. In formulating such a communications strategy, the Department of Public Information will build on the momentum generated in the media by its information activities in support of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and integrate this strategy within the overall information programme to follow up the current cycle of major United Nations development conferences. Utilizing the full array of promotional activities and multimedia products undertaken by the Department, the communications strategy will draw on the Department's network of information centres and services located in 67 countries and the inter-agency coordination mechanism, the Joint United Nations Information Committee.

74. With respect to the Statistical Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, in paragraph 333 the Platform for Action recommends that the Statistical Division should have an important coordinating role in international work in statistics, as described in chapter IV, strategic objective H.3.

75. In the period 1996-2001, implementation of the interrelated mandates of the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women will require the development and dissemination of indicators on women and men with respect to the informal sector, unremunerated work, poverty, youth, elderly and disabled persons (para. 206 (e)-(h) and (k) and para. 208 (b)). It will also require the compilation and dissemination of the database and methodologies underlying these indicators, as well as the provision of technical support for work at the national level in these fields (para. 206 (b)). Statistical concepts and methods will need to be developed to measure and value unremunerated work. This would involve developing an international classification of activities for time-use statistics that is sensitive to the differences between women and men in remunerated and unremunerated work (para. 206 (g)), and working on the analytical framework and policy uses of supplementary accounts to the 1993 System of National Accounts that recognize the economic contribution of women. In this regard, the Statistical Division will interact with the inter-agency task force referred to above (para. 38), as well as with the Administrative

Committee on Coordination task force on basic social services for all (see para. 89 below), which will address, inter alia, database issues emerging from the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the Fourth World Conference on Women.

(g) United Nations Development Fund for Women

76. As indicated in the Platform for Action:

> "UNIFEM has the mandate to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and social development in developing countries by providing technical and financial assistance to incorporate the women's dimension into development at all levels. Therefore, UNIFEM should review and strengthen, as appropriate, its work programme in the light of the Platform for Action, focusing on women's political and economic empowerment. Its advocacy role should concentrate on fostering a multilateral policy dialogue on women's empowerment. Adequate resources for carrying out its functions should be made available." (para. 335)

77. The operational role of UNIFEM in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women will be consolidated. It will continue to focus its work at the country level within the context of the resident coordinator system. UNIFEM will also work to bring its experience in programme countries to the attention of other organizations in the United Nations system with a view to strengthening the gender perspective of development programmes and increasing synergy with other United Nations organizations. UNIFEM will concentrate, as specified in the Platform for Action, on women's economic and political empowerment. With respect to women's economic empowerment, UNIFEM will concentrate on globalization and economic restructuring with a focus on trade and structural adjustment policies, gender-sensitive development policy and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, including thorough new approaches to both micro-enterprise development and natural resource management. Its work with respect to political empowerment will focus on strengthening the role of women in governance, women's human rights, conflict prevention and peace-building, and empowering women to participate effectively in the global conference processes and the implementation of conference outcomes.

78. UNIFEM will support women's organizations to increase leadership opportunities for decision-making and advocacy for women. UNIFEM will play a key role in supporting the implementation of the Platform for Action at the country level, including through the proposed inter-agency task force, and the resident coordinator system.

(h) International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

79. The Platform for Action states:

> "INSTRAW has a mandate to promote research and training on women's situation and development. In the light of the Platform for Action, INSTRAW should review its work programme and develop a programme for implementing those aspects of the Platform for Action that fall within its mandate. It should identify those types of research and research

methodologies to be given priority, strengthen national capacities to carry out women's studies and gender research, including that on the status of the girl child, and develop networks of research institutions that can be mobilized for that purpose. It should also identify those types of education and training that can be effectively supported and promoted by the Institute." (para. 334)

80. Research and training activities to further the advancement of women requiring priority attention in the light of the Fourth World Conference on Women and other global United Nations conferences will include the study and understanding of the obstacles to the full recognition of women's participation in sustainable development, including methodological/conceptual development; concrete research and training programmes focusing on ways and means to solve the extreme poverty affecting women world wide, in particular in developing countries; and the dissemination of research findings and analytical tools to assist the efforts of intergovernmental agencies, governmental officials and policy makers, as well as academic and research centres and non-governmental organizations. Sections A and E to L in chapter IV of the Platform for Action are of particular relevance to the work of the Institute.

(i) Other organizations of the United Nations system

81. In paragraphs 336 to 344 of the Platform for Action, the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations are called upon to strengthen their support for actions at the national level and to enhance their contributions to coordinated follow-up by the United Nations.

"... each organization should set out the specific actions they will undertake, including goals and targets to realign priorities and redirect resources to meet the global priorities identified in the Platform for Action. There should be a clear delineation of responsibility and accountability. These proposals should in turn be reflected in the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001." (para. 336)

The Platform for Action additionally calls for gender mainstreaming and gender focal points in each agency.

82. The Platform for Action also recommends that "the Administrative Committee on Coordination consider how its participating entities might best coordinate their activities, inter alia, through existing procedures at the inter-agency level for ensuring system-wide coordination to implement and help follow up objectives of the Platform for Action" (para. 316).

83. Each organization should "take steps to enhance and support the roles and responsibilities of its focal points on women issues" (para. 337); "cooperate more [when providing technical assistance] to ensure the continuing promotion of the advancement of women" (para. 338); "provide appropriate technical assistance and other forms of assistance to the countries with economies in transition in order to facilitate solution of their specific problems regarding the advancement of women" (para. 339); and "accord greater priority to the recruitment and promotion of women at the Professional level to achieve gender

balance, particularly at decision-making levels ... Due regard should be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Organizations should report regularly to their governing bodies on progress towards this goal" (para. 340). The Platform for Action proposes that "coordination of United Nations operational activities for development at the country level should be improved through the resident coordinator system in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular General Assembly resolution 47/199, to take full account of the Platform" (para. 34_).

84. Paragraphs 342 to 344 of the Platform for Action encourage international financial institutions, in implementing the Platform:

> "To review and revise policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes benefit women and thus contribute to sustainable development. They are also encouraged to increase the number of women in high-level positions, increase staff training in gender analysis and institute policies and guidelines to ensure full consideration of the differential impact of lending programmes and other activities on women and men. In this regard, the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations, as well as its funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, should establish regular and substantive dialogue, including dialogue at the field level, for more efficient and effective coordination of their assistance in order to strengthen the effectiveness of their programmes for the benefit of women and their families." (para. 342)

85. Moreover, in paragraph 354, the Platform for Action proposes that the international financial institutions and regional development banks "should be invited to examine their grants and lending and to allocate loans and grants to programmes for implementing the Platform for Action in developing countries, especially in Africa and the least developed countries". The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank along with the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system are invited to assist countries with economies in transition to design and implement policies and programmes for the advancement of women" (para. 356).

86. The Platform for Action recommends that consideration should be given "to inviting the World Trade Organization to consider how it might contribute to the implementation of the Platform for Action, including activities in cooperation with the United Nations system" (para. 343).

87. These recommendations will be brought to the attention of all concerned organizations, and their responses will be covered in subsequent reports. The concerned organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, will be invited to participate in the proposed inter-agency task force (see para. 38 above).

88. The revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001, which will reflect the proposals for action agreed to in Beijing and at other recent global conferences, will provide a basis for monitoring the implementation by the United Nations system of the Platform for Action and related recommendations on gender issues formulated by other

conferences. It will provide a mechanism for mobilizing and monitoring joint activities and for identifying gaps in the implementation of the Platform. The plan is scheduled for review by the Commission on the Status of Women, the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Economic and Social Council in 1996.

89. At the second regular session for 1995 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, held on 12 and 13 October, executive heads agreed that monitoring the follow-up by the United Nations system to the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Social Summit for Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women will be a main concern of the Committee in the period ahead. The Administrative Committee on Coordination decided that it will, to the extent possible, undertake this work on the basis of cross-sectoral themes, bringing together related results of recent global conferences. The Committee also decided to strengthen coordinated support for follow-up action at the country level, through inter-agency task forces organized around three interrelated themes: (a) the enabling environment for social and economic development; (b) employment and sustainable livelihoods; and (c) basic social services for all. It directed that the gender dimension should be taken fully into account in the work of each of these task forces. Noting that the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women encompasses but goes well beyond these themes, the Secretary-General, following action by the General Assembly, will propose to the Administrative Committee on Coordination the establishment of a goal-oriented, inter-agency task force on the empowerment and advancement of women in order to promote sustained and coordinated follow-up to the Platform for Action and to ensure that the improvement of the status of women in all its aspects is placed in the mainstream of the work of the system. The experience of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Group on Women, a network of focal points on women's issues that has been meeting within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination since International Women's Year, in 1975, will be drawn upon in this regard.

(j) Non-governmental organizations

90. As noted above, the Conference was characterized by the unprecedented involvement of civil society, including the participation of an unprecedented number of non-governmental organizations. In recognition of this contribution, the Platform for Action states that the active support and participation of a broad and diverse range of institutional actors should be encouraged, including "legislative bodies, academic and research institutions, professional associations, trade unions, cooperatives, local community groups, non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations and feminist groups, the media, religious groups, youth organizations and cultural groups, as well as financial and non-profit organizations" (para. 295).

91. The Platform for Action provides for a role for non-governmental organizations in the design and implementation of national strategies or plans of action (para. 297). It further states that non-governmental organizations should be encouraged "to develop their own programmes to complement government efforts. Women's organizations and feminist groups, in collaboration with other non-governmental organizations, should be encouraged to organize networks, as necessary, and to advocate for and support the implementation of the Platform

for Action by Governments and regional and international bodies" (para. 298). The Platform calls for strengthening the capacity of non-governmental organizations to mobilize and contribute resources towards implementation of the Platform (para. 350). Underscoring the role that non-governmental organizations have in implementing the Platform for Action, the Platform calls for consideration to be given to "establishing a mechanism for collaborating with non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Platform at various levels" (para. 344).

92. The Secretary-General attaches great importance to the continued mobilization of all elements of civil society in promoting an effective follow-up to the Conference and expects that the Commission on the Status of Women will give consideration to means of promoting the effective implementation of the provisions of the Platform for Action relating to non-governmental organizations, including the establishment of appropriate mechanisms to enhance collaboration with these organizations.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTIETH SESSION

93. Consideration by the General Assembly of the report on the Fourth World Conference on Women should serve to consolidate the commitments entered into by Member States and the international community in Beijing. To that end, the Assembly at its current session may wish to consider taking the following action:

(a) Calling upon Member States and the international community to commit themselves to full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action through the early development of specific implementation strategies, including the establishment or improvement of national machineries for the advancement of women and measures to integrate the gender dimension into all policies and programmes;

(b) Calling upon the organizations of the United Nations system to extend their full support to Governments and the international community in the implementation of the Platform for Action in the context of an integrated follow-up to all recent global conferences;

(c) Inviting all elements of civil society to contribute actively to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Platform for Action;

(d) Deciding to review the implementation of the Platform for Action on a biennial basis;

(e) Inviting the Economic and Social Council to utilize its high-level, coordination and operational activities segments to further policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation towards the achievement of the objectives of the Platform for Action, in accordance with the recommendations of the Conference;

(f) Inviting the Economic and Social Council to review and strengthen the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women, taking into account the need

for effective coordination with other related commissions and Conference follow-up, so as to enable the Commission to play a central role, within the United Nations system, in monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action, and in assisting the Council in coordination of reporting on implementation;

(g) Inviting the Commission on the Status of Women, in developing its work programme for the period 1996-2000, to consider modalities for maximizing its contribution to the follow-up to the Conference, including monitoring of implementation, policy development with respect to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and the strengthening of its catalytic role in mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities;

(h) Also inviting, within their mandates, all other United Nations organs and their subsidiary bodies to take due account of the Platform for Action and to ensure the integration of the gender dimension in their respective policy-making activities;

(i) Calling for mobilization of resources from all sources to further the implementation of the Platform for Action, including sustained contributions to voluntarily funded programmes of the United Nations system for activities on gender and development;

(j) Noting the commitment of the Secretary-General to exercise responsibility for coordination of policy within the United Nations for the implementation of the Platform for Action and for the mainstreaming of a system-wide gender perspective in all activities of the United Nations at all levels, and the arrangements being made by the Secretary-General in this regard;

(k) Noting the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level advisory board on the advancement of women to ensure that the expectations and concerns of major constituencies on gender-related issues are fully taken into account in implementing the Platform for Action;

(l) Noting the key roles to be played by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, through, inter alia, the proposed inter-agency task force, the regional commissions and the resident coordinator system, in contributing to the coordinated implementation of the Platform for Action at the inter-agency, regional and national levels;

(m) Providing for the strengthening of the capacity of relevant entities within the United Nations to contribute, in a coordinated manner, to the effective follow-up to the Conference.

Notes

1/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20).

2/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

3/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ..., chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II respectively.

4/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 9 (E/1993/29).

5/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

6/ Ibid., para. 42.

7/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1).

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 49/98 of 19 December 1994, the General Assembly decided to convene a High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s to carry out the mid-term global review, consider new measures as necessary and report to the General Assembly on progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the Meeting and on the implementation of the resolution. The present note has been prepared in implementation of the decision of the Meeting to submit the outcome of the Meeting to the General Assembly for its appropriate consideration and action. A report (A/50/746) is being issued in response to the requests in resolutions 48/171 of 21 December 1993 and 49/98 that the Secretary-General report to the General Assembly on the Meeting and on the implementation of those resolutions.

2. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting met in New York from 26 September to 6 October 1995. It adopted: (a) an assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level, and progress in international support measures; and (b) recommendations covering a number of key areas of concern for least developed countries. It also adopted a Declaration on the Mid-term Global Review of the Programme of Action. These texts are reproduced in the present document, together with the statements made on their adoption.

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MID-TERM GLOBAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

Part One

DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON THE MID-TERM GLOBAL REVIEW ON THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

(a) The participants in the High-level Meeting have undertaken an assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and agreed on concrete recommendations to ensure that the Programme is more effectively implemented throughout the remaining part of the decade.

(b) They reaffirmed their commitment to work cooperatively towards achieving the prime objective of the Programme of Action which is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries, to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in these countries and, in the process, to set them on the path of economic growth and sustainable development based on shared responsibility and strengthened partnership.

(c) The least developed countries as a group have not been able to meet many of the objectives of the Programme of Action and their overall socio-economic situation has continued to deteriorate. This deeply concerned the participants at the Meeting. At the domestic level, civil strife and recurrent natural disasters in some of the least developed countries and the resulting social economic burdens, macroeconomic imbalances and poor performance of the productive sectors, inter alia the lack of adequate physical and institutional infrastructures, have contributed to this deterioration. Persistent and serious debt and debt-servicing problems, very low levels of exports, and a declining share in world trade and the insufficiency of external finance, have had unfavourable consequences on their growth and development.

(d) However, the least developed countries have continued to implement, under many difficulties, wide-ranging and far-reaching reforms. In some countries these efforts, complemented by a favourable external climate, have shown encouraging results. Many development partners have provided increased support to least developed countries, although the commitment to provide them with a significant and substantial increase in the aggregate level of external support has not happened.

(e) The participants are determined to pursue their efforts to implement the measures and recommendations agreed at the present Meeting. They are confident that the success of these efforts would lead to a reactivation and acceleration of growth and development in the least developed countries, and enable them to participate in and benefit from the processes of globalization and liberalization.

(f) They call upon all Governments, the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations, and the competent non-governmental organizations, to combine their efforts in implementing the measures and recommendations agreed

upon by the present Meeting so as to ensure the success of the Programme of Action.

(g) They firmly believe that, given political will on the part of the least developed countries, which have the primary responsibility for their development, and the support of the international community, the least developed countries will be able to enter the next century with better prospects for their peoples.

Part Two

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, AND PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MEASURES

INTRODUCTION

1. The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in 1990, adopted the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. The basic principles and aims of the Programme of Action are as valid today as when they were drawn up. The prime objective of the Programme of Action is to arrest the further deterioration in the socio-economic situation of LDCs, to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in these countries and, in the process, to set them on the path of sustained growth and development. The policies and measures in support of these objectives set out in the Programme of Action revolve around the following major areas: establishment of a macroeconomic policy framework conducive to sustained economic growth and long-term development; development and mobilization of human resources; development, expansion and modernization of the productive base; reversing the trend towards environmental degradation; promotion of an integrated policy of rural development aimed at increasing food production, enhancing rural income and enhancing non-agricultural sector activities; and the provision of adequate external support.

2. It was noted with great concern that only one country, i.e. Botswana, has graduated from the group of LDCs since the early 1970s. At the same time the number of LDCs has increased from 41 at the time of the Paris Conference in September 1990 to 48 countries at present, without a proportionate increase in support measures despite national and international efforts.

I. MAIN DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE EARLY 1990s

3. Despite vigorous efforts by LDCs to implement economic reforms as envisaged by the Programme of Action, the LDCs as a group have not been able to meet many of the objectives of the Programme of Action and their overall socio-economic situation has continued to deteriorate. Several factors, both domestic and external, have contributed to the overall socio-economic deterioration in the LDCs. The domestic factors include: civil strife and recurrent natural disasters in some LDCs and the resulting social and economic burdens, political instability, macroeconomic imbalances, manifested in large fiscal and balance-

of-payments deficits, in many cases the unfavourable short-term impact of macroeconomic policy adjustments on specific areas, in particular the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the population, and poor performance of the productive sectors including lack of adequate physical infrastructure. The external factors include: persistent debt and debt-servicing problems; the decline in the share of LDCs in world trade and their continued marginalization; the inadequacy of external finance; and the emergence of new claimants for aid.

4. According to UNCTAD statistics, the real GDP growth rate of the LDCs averaged only 1.7 per cent per annum during the first four years of the 1990s, having declined from the growth rate of 2.3 per cent achieved during the 1980s. Despite the recovery in the world economy, the situation in the LDCs continues to be precarious, although a few of them made limited progress. With population growing at an average annual rate of 2.9 per cent, GDP per capita suffered an annual 1.1 per cent decline, thus threatening to worsen the already precarious income and consumption levels, as well as to widen the savings-investment gap in these countries.

5. While the slow-down in economic growth rates was common to both Asian and African LDCs, the former, which benefited, inter alia, from a relatively favourable regional environment, attained an average per capita output growth of 1.4 per cent in the 1990s, as compared with a 2.1 per cent per annum fall suffered by the latter. There have also been significant inter-country variations in growth performance. Thus, it is encouraging to note that, despite the poor performance for the group as a whole, nearly one quarter of LDCs were able to attain positive per capita income gains in the early 1990s. A strong expansion of agricultural production, internal stability, strong government commitments, a sound political and regulatory framework for development, complemented by significant external support, among other factors, have contributed to raising economic growth rates.

6. The worsening of socio-economic conditions in many LDCs in the 1990s has increasingly been translated into a marked deterioration in human welfare as reflected in reduced caloric intakes, increased mortality and morbidity, the re-emergence and spread of diseases, lower school enrolment, further marginalization of the weakest members of society, and other signals of acute social distress, as further reviewed below in chapter V.

7. Overall, the external environment facing LDCs has remained difficult. As these countries moved into the 1990s, despite an increase in exports of manufactured goods, their share in world exports and imports fell by more than three eighths and one third from the already low levels of 0.7 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively in 1980. Despite vigorous efforts to diversify the largely commodity-based composition of their exports, the LDCs' economies continued to be vulnerable to vicissitudes and instability in commodity markets. Official development assistance (ODA), on which LDCs depend principally for their external financing, registered a decline over the early 1990s, and the aid outlook remains uncertain. Although a large number of LDCs have adopted national regulatory frameworks conducive to foreign investment, they have not yet attracted significant foreign direct investment (FDI). Despite measures adopted to alleviate their external debt burden, this burden continued to be

unsustainably high for many LDCs and seriously compromises their adjustment and development efforts.

8. Some developing countries are also important development partners of LDCs. They have technical assistance and training programmes from which the latter have benefited. The potential for expanded economic and technical cooperation between LDCs and other developing countries merits further exploration and support by the international community, especially in view of the new opportunities emerging with the dynamic growth experience of a number of those other developing countries. As a means of maximizing the potential for such South-South cooperation, triangular funding arrangements which include the active contribution of developed countries and relevant international organizations can be initiated.

9. Several LDCs have been taking a number of measures to promote trade with neighbouring countries. For example, a number of African LDCs, especially land-locked ones, have sought to establish some form of free trade area or customs union at the subregional level. However, the establishment of such subregional arrangements has encountered a number of obstacles which have limited their effectiveness.

10. In sum, therefore, the requisite progress has not been made in most LDCs during the first half of the 1990s in realizing the overall objective of the Programme of Action, although some progress has been recorded in a number of LDCs as a result of the implementation of appropriate policies. Furthermore, the ongoing processes of economic globalization and liberalization are likely to have profound consequences for the future development of the LDCs. These processes, which offer great opportunities for growth and development, also entail risks of instability and marginalization. LDCs as a whole have made limited progress in overcoming structural constraints, infrastructural insufficiencies, debt overhang, promoting and diversifying the enterprise and export sectors, attracting foreign investment and creating a sufficient technological base. In this context, most of the LDCs will face globalization and liberalization from the situation of a constrained environment.

II. THE POLICY REFORM PROCESS

11. In recent years, most LDCs have embarked on a process of structural adjustment and wide-ranging reforms, often under internationally agreed frameworks for structural and sectoral adjustment. Important areas of policy focus have been towards coping with fiscal and balance-of-payments deficits, improved mobilization and use of domestic resources, through tax reforms, improving the effectiveness of the public sector and providing greater opportunities for the private sector. LDCs have also initiated reforms in critical areas such as population, education, health, food security and trade policy.

12. There are, however, some cases where the pace and scope of these reforms contrast with the limited progress achieved. In particular, despite success in securing short-term macroeconomic stability, certain situations sometimes existed where the reforms appear neither to have helped in lifting structural

constraints facing the economies of LDCs nor to have improved supply capacity and export diversification. Thus, while it was recognized that the reform process sometimes could not guarantee immediate results, it was emphasized that the efforts of LDCs provided a context in which, over the longer term, growth and structural transformation could reinforce each other under more favourable circumstances.

13. The experience of LDCs points towards a number of factors which determined the success or otherwise of reform measures. Prime among them has been government commitment to reforms, the appropriateness of national policy contents, sequencing of reforms and the level of external financial support to underpin reform efforts. Problems inherent in policy design, particularly the neglect of structural conditions and endowment-related considerations, retarded and even reversed the momentum of reforms. Inadequate domestic and external resource mobilization has been a particularly critical constraint for development in the LDCs.

14. The socio-economic difficulties of most LDCs have been further exacerbated by a specific set of environmental problems, such as land degradation and erosion, drought and desertification, which impair prospects for their development. These environmental problems have been aggravated in LDCs by a number of complex and interrelated factors, which include poverty and poverty-linked population pressures and cross-border refugee movements resulting from man-made and natural disasters. A noteworthy development has been that LDCs have demonstrated growing awareness of environmental issues and problems and many have implemented policies, strategies and institutional mechanisms to deal with them. The special situation and needs of the LDCs should be given special priority. International cooperation for sustainable development should be strengthened in order to support and complement the efforts of the LDCs. In particular, new and additional financial resources from all sources, both public and private, that are both adequate and predictable are necessary for environmentally sound development programmes and projects. However, adequate international support is needed to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development, and in particular in the context of activities under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the promotion of national capacity-building to help prevent and mitigate future emergencies.

15. In many LDCs, it is encouraging to note that far-reaching changes in the system of governance, ranging from free elections to democratic constitutional reforms, have ushered in new possibilities for establishing more participatory and transparent systems of government. Generally, LDCs which achieved a revival of economic growth were those where greater progress has been made in securing popular participation and respect of human rights. In a number of LDCs, the consequences of man-made and other disasters have continued to drain resources, hampering overall long-term development. In some of these LDCs, armed conflict has often resulted in large-scale displacement of population, food emergencies and the unleashing of other destabilizing forces. The developmental task of Governments in meeting the socio-economic challenges posed became highly constrained under these circumstances. Besides destabilization caused by the presence of a large number of refugees, some LDCs have been obliged to provide asylum, with far-reaching implications for the budget, the environment impacts,

other resource needs and related security problems which require urgent concrete international support for those countries hosting the refugees. The LDCS undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation, in the process of consolidating peace and democracy require the support of the international community.

III. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS

16. During the early 1990s, agriculture in most LDCs has been characterized by lags in production growth relative to that of the population, continued declines in terms of trade and loss of market shares for traditional agricultural commodities. Agricultural production in LDCs fell by 1.1 per cent per annum in per capita terms during the period 1990-1993. Several LDCs responded to the continued poor performance of the sector by introducing reform measures, particularly reforming producer price incentives and marketing systems and the provision of essential agricultural inputs. While the overall thrust of these measures has been the removal of barriers to the private sector in agriculture, they have been unable to provide support services. A particularly disquieting trend in many LDCs is the growing incidence of man-made and recurrent natural disasters such as drought, flood, and devastating cyclones, which are the most important causes of food insecurity in many African LDCs. The situation has been further exacerbated by declines in food output and limited capacity to offset shortfalls through imports.

17. Notwithstanding the wide variations in manufacturing growth rates among LDCs, the performance of the manufacturing sector on the whole has weakened in recent years, manufacturing activities have remained relatively undiversified, and the utilization of capacity and resources has been low. The sector growth rate decelerated to 1.4 per cent per annum during the early 1990s, from 2.1 per cent per annum in the 1980s. While some one third of LDCs maintained a positive growth of manufacturing value added (MVA) in the 1980s and early 1990s, most LDCs experienced stagnation and even declines in manufacturing output. The response of the LDCs to deteriorating manufacturing performance has been through adjustments of macroeconomic policies and instruments, and sectoral measures to augment manufacturing output and efficiency. At the sectoral level, the LDCs have reoriented their incentive structure and introduced changes in institutional policies and regulatory arrangements in order to improve the macroeconomic environment for manufacturing production.

18. The LDCs have made major efforts to improve their transport and transit infrastructure systems during the last decade. The budgetary constraints faced by LDCs have, however, gradually undermined the financial capabilities of Governments to maintain the momentum of these efforts. These constraints are particularly felt in land-locked and island LDCs, where inadequate physical infrastructure poses major obstacles to structural transformation and economic development.

IV. LAND-LOCKED AND ISLAND LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

19. Sixteen of the 48 least developed countries are also land-locked. The high transport costs which result from their particular geographical handicaps continue to have a significant adverse impact on their international trade performance and overall economic development. In order to alleviate the particular problems which these countries face, the land-locked and transit developing countries, as well as the donor community, adopted a Global Framework for Transport Cooperation (TD/B/LDC/AC.1/6), which contains a comprehensive set of recommendations for concrete action at the national and subregional levels designed to improve the efficiency of transit transport systems. The Framework underscores the need for extensive financial and technical support by the donor community. The donor community recognizes this. Furthermore, the Framework calls upon UNCTAD and the regional economic commissions to play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the agreed actions.

20. Island least developed countries continue to face particular problems resulting from their smallness, insularity and remoteness from the major economic centres. They are vulnerable to a number of adverse factors, including environmental degradation. Poor internal and external transport links to world markets negatively compound their ability to participate effectively in world trade. The Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (A/CONF.167/9), adopted in Barbados in May 1994, outlines a range of measures that need to be undertaken in order to alleviate the particular problems which these countries face. The Programme calls for increased support by the international community to ensure effective implementation of these measures in conjunction with national measures in support of sustainable development.

V. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

21. LDCs have adopted and are implementing policies, measures and programmes to tackle key problems in human resources development. However, the expansion of national population programmes within the overall framework of human resources development has been difficult for a number of reasons, such as funding constraints, among others. These programmes have been complemented by strong efforts to change attitudes, including persuasion and campaigns relying on traditional and modern information techniques.

22. Despite major difficulties, there have been some encouraging results achieved by some LDCs, particularly in the areas of health and education. However, in many LDCs, mortality rates continue to be high. The situation is exacerbated by poor sanitation and hygienic conditions and the lack of safe drinking water supplies. AIDS and tropical epidemic and endemic diseases have become a major cause of death in recent years in some LDCs, as these countries have limited resources to deal effectively with such endemics and epidemics. The economic crisis faced by LDCs has further undermined health conditions in many countries as living standards have fallen, health services have been cut owing to budgetary pressures, and the availability of imported medicines and other medical supplies has dwindled. Education services continue to be affected by deteriorating economic conditions, in particular by budgetary constraints. There is need for investment in the development of human capacities,

particularly in programmes of health, nutrition, education and training and population activities.

23. Although women constitute half of human resources in the LDCs, they have continued to be hampered by their marginal position from playing their full role in socio-economic development. Despite measures being taken to enhance their role in development, women in the LDCs still lag behind their male counterparts as well as women from other developing countries in all areas of social and economic development. They face particular problems related to gender discrimination, such as limited access to productive resources, restricted education and training opportunities, poor health status, low representation in strategic decision-making positions, as well as having to bear a high dependency burden: the more so, as deepening poverty is felt more acutely by women-headed households. In addition, prevalent attitudes regarding women's abilities and their proper socio-economic role, and women's own lack of knowledge about their rights, have kept them away from mainstream development. The lack of follow-up of decisions and internationally agreed recommendations aiming at the advancement of the status of women has also been a major cause of the poor prevailing situation.

VI. EXTERNAL TRADE AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE URUGUAY ROUND

24. The Programme of Action underlined that it is essential that all countries contribute to developing a more open, credible and durable multilateral trading system, recognizing that the results of this process could be a reflection, inter alia, of their respective weight in world trade. It is encouraging to note that the LDCs have contributed to this process by implementing important trade liberalization measures. The Programme of Action also called for important support measures in favour of LDCs in such areas as duty-free treatment of their exports, exemptions from quotas and ceilings and the use of simplified and flexible rules of origin. Progress made in the provision of such support has been important in the case of a number of countries. While a number of LDCs have been able to increase their exports, the overall trade situation of the LDCs has deteriorated, in that their share in global trade has continued to decline. Although globalization and liberalization offer opportunities to LDCs, these processes also pose major challenges, particularly in the form of increased global competition. Despite recent improvements, world commodity markets have remained volatile and depressed. As a result the LDCs have become further marginalized and this trend needs to be reversed.

25. The extremely low export capacity of most LDCs has continued to be one of the major obstacles to growth and a source of the high dependence on ODA for financing the necessary investment, imports and technical support for development. Difficulties have persisted in expanding the external trading opportunities of LDCs, as commodity and market diversification measures have been rendered difficult principally by lack of investment, technology and skills to augment levels of production and efficiency.

26. LDCs have been granted special tariff preferences under various GSP schemes and other preferential arrangements. Following the conclusion of the Uruguay

Round, a number of countries have taken steps to improve their GSP schemes in favour of LDCs. However, some schemes still exclude a number of products of export interest to LDCs (e.g. textiles, clothing, carpets, footwear, leather goods etc.) and have rigid rules of origin. As the ability of many LDCs to utilize such facilities remains constrained, only a part of GSP-covered imports from LDCs has received preferential treatment. Thus the use of GSP schemes, in particular by African LDCs, has remained limited.

27. The adoption of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round will have significant consequences for the trading prospects of LDCs, in particular as regards preferences and the competitiveness of LDC exports. Increased transparency of trade regimes and the reduction of trade barriers, particularly tariff-binding on agricultural products and reduction in tariff escalation, as foreseen in the Marrakesh arrangements, provide LDCs with increased opportunities in the long run. On the other hand, concerns have been expressed that LDCs may suffer erosion of preferential margins in relation to many of their exports to major markets and a possible consequential loss in export market shares and export earnings. In addition, the net food-importing LDCs may face higher import bills, at least in the short run, resulting from the agreement on agriculture. In the long run, the Final Act poses to LDCs the twin challenges of, first, developing and strengthening institutional and human capacities to formulate and manage legislation implementing the complex set of agreements of the Round, and secondly, building capacities for maximizing opportunities arising from these agreements. In this regard, the provisions of the Marrakesh Declaration and the ministerial decisions in favour of LDCs should be fully implemented.

28. A number of developed countries have set up in their own countries import promotion agencies in order to promote more trade with LDCs. Such agencies have played a helpful role in providing support services and in acting as contact points for business/trade missions from LDCs, undertaking market research and giving publicity to LDC products.

29. Trade among the LDCs, on the one hand, and that between LDCs and other developing countries within the same subregional or regional economic groupings, on the other hand, remains insignificant as a share of international trade. Only a few LDCs at present receive preferential treatment for their exports under the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP) on a non-reciprocal basis. Additionally, subregional and regional trade is constrained by a number of obstacles, such as the fact that most countries produce similar export products, that subregional transport infrastructure is geared to trade with developed countries, that progress in tariff reduction is limited due to fiscal revenue implications for preference-giving countries, and that international support remains limited.

VII. EXTERNAL FINANCE

30. It was noted with concern that ODA remains the single most important source of external financing for LDCs. While welcoming improved aid performance by some donors, at the same time it was noted that overall aid performance by donors fell short of the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action. ODA flows (actual disbursements) from Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

countries, and multilateral agencies mainly financed by them, to the LDCs declined sharply in 1993. In absolute terms, ODA flows fell by $1.5 billion. Almost $1 billion of this was due to a drop in multilateral aid flows to LDCs. In view of the important role of multilateral funding in meeting the financial needs of LDCs and the uncertain resource outlook for some of the major multilateral financial institutions and grant-based programmes, this is a particularly worrying development. The ODA/GNP ratio for DAC donors as a whole declined to 0.08 per cent in 1993 as compared with 0.09 per cent in 1990. Moreover, this shortfall has to be seen against the agreed menu of aid targets and/or commitments as set out in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action for the LDCs which call for a significant and substantial increase in resources to LDCs and include, inter alia, the targets of 0.15 per cent and 0.20 per cent of donor GNP as ODA.

31. Donors have modified and improved their policies in the area of aid modalities. Most DAC donors have now shifted to a grant basis in their aid programmes for LDCs, resulting in a further increase in the grant element of bilateral ODA (which averaged 97 per cent in 1993). Most multilateral funding to LDCs is also on highly concessional terms. Multilateral funding constitutes an important complement to bilateral ODA for the LDCs and it is crucial that the base of this multilateral funding be sufficiently broadened. International efforts should continue to mobilize resources to LDCs implementing structural adjustment programmes, such as the World Bank-led Special Programme of Assistance (SPA) process, which in some cases have resulted in limited progress.

VIII. EXTERNAL DEBT AND RELIEF MEASURES

32. The external debt and its servicing burden remains a crucial issue for the majority of LDCs. According to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) information, LDC total debt stock amounted to $127 billion in 1993, corresponding to 76 per cent of their combined GDP. It appears that for half of these countries, their external debt is equal to or exceeds their respective GDP. The difficulties many LDCs have in meeting their external obligations, in the context of the critical current economic situation and their poor export performance, is reflected in the relatively low levels of debt service paid in relation to scheduled payments. The share of multilateral debt in total long-term debt, as well as debt service, has increased considerably in recent years. Thus, in 1993 the multilateral debt constituted around 36 per cent of total debt of LDCs as compared with 27 per cent in 1984. The corresponding share in total debt service during this period increased even more, from less than 30 per cent to almost 50 per cent. This increase partly reflects the "lender of last resort function" of the international financial institutions and the fact that an increasing number of bilateral creditors are relinquishing many of their ODA claims to LDCs and have shifted from credit lending to grants. Debt-relief measures taken so far have not yet fully provided an effective and durable solution to the outstanding debt and debt-servicing burden of LDCs, although important relief measures have been taken to reduce their debt stock and debt-service obligations. In particular, following the adoption of the Toronto terms in 1988 (and enhanced Toronto terms in 1991), from which 19 LDCs benefited, the Paris Club in 1994 improved the debt treatment of the poorest countries by

adopting the "Naples terms". These may constitute a step forward for the LDCs but might not be sufficient by themselves to resolve their external debt problem. Eight LDCs have already benefited from these provisions, which notably offer the possibilities to reduce the eligible debt of the poorest and most indebted countries by 50 to 67 per cent.

IX. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION

A. The national level

33. At the national level, review arrangements, including UNDP-sponsored round tables and the World Bank consultative and aid groups, have been further consolidated during the early 1990s, with additional countries joining or rejoining the process and meetings taking place more frequently and on a more regular basis. A strengthened country review process was considered the principal means of policy dialogue, and for coordinating the aid efforts of development partners with the development programmes of LDCs as well as mobilizing the required resources for their implementation. In all, over 60 full-scale consultative aid groups and round table or similar meetings were organized from the adoption of the Programme of Action until early 1995. While results in terms of resource mobilization have varied between countries, these meetings no doubt have an important role to play in improving aid flows to LDCs and in aid coordination. An important aspect of the country review process in recent years has been the attempt to link these arrangements more closely to national policy-making and programming.

B. The regional level

34. At the regional level, the Programme of Action called for monitoring progress in economic cooperation between LDCs and other developing countries, particularly those in the same region. It also called for organizing cluster meetings to improve and strengthen existing cooperation arrangements at the regional and subregional levels. The United Nations regional commissions have, as part of their ongoing work, continued to follow up and monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action in LDCs in their respective regions. ESCAP has established a Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries. ECA has continued to consider progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action in African LDCs during the annual meetings of the Commission. However, owing to resource constraints in the United Nations the cluster meeting process has not been initiated.

C. The global level

35. At the global level, UNCTAD has responsibility as the focal point for the monitoring, follow-up and review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition to the regular follow-up, monitoring and review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action at the global level by the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, efforts have also been made to promote the

full mobilization and coordination of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system for the purpose of the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action, but more remains to be done. Individual agencies have continued to develop and implement assistance programmes for the LDCs and pursued their advocacy and policy advisory missions with regard to these countries. There is need for regular reporting of progress made by various agencies.

Part Three

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. The present recommendations are based on the assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s presented above, as well as on information contained in The Least Developed Countries 1995 Report, and recommendations made by the expert groups convened by the UNCTAD secretariat as part of the preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. These recommendations cover a number of key areas of concern for the LDCs.

I. MAJOR CHALLENGES

37. The challenges facing LDCs in the second half of the 1990s are to reverse the decline in economic and social conditions, to promote sustainable economic growth, development and structural transformation and to avoid becoming further marginalized in the international economy. An intensified policy commitment by both LDC Governments and the international community will be required to meet these challenges. In implementing domestic policies, LDCs should endeavour to focus on measures to restore and maintain macroeconomic stability; to promote the growth and diversification of exports; to strengthen an enabling environment for private sector investment and entrepreneurship; to enhance human resources development; to continue to implement population and development programmes with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural background of each country's people; to adhere to basic human rights recognized by the international community which strike an optimal balance in the interrelationship between their population, their natural resource base and the environment, taking into account economic imperatives; to strengthen the infrastructure; to promote good governance as mentioned in the Programme of Action; to broaden popular participation in the development process; and to ensure the full utilization of human resources along with democratization, promotion of good governance, observance of the rule of law and peaceful resolution of any civil conflicts where such conditions exist. The broad outlines of a domestic economic policy framework conducive to meeting the challenges facing the LDCs are delineated below.

II. THE ECONOMIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

38. (a) Macroeconomic stability would require rationalization and sound management of public expenditure, properly planned monetary growth and maintenance of appropriate exchange rates commensurate with ensuring a sustainable external balance;

(b) Policies to increase export earnings, including appropriate exchange rate and trade policy reforms to reverse the decline in the share of world trade of the LDCs, diversify the composition of their export structure and to facilitate their ability to exploit opportunities arising from the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, are essential;

(c) This will entail strengthening of existing policies and measures for the promotion and support of the private sector complemented with public investment, including policy-based incentives or the adoption of new policies and measures where necessary;

(d) The potential for economic and technical cooperation between LDCs and other developing countries merits further exploration. The international community should help LDCs promote trade links and should take appropriate measures to support such trade links, particularly subregional and regional trade. Such trade could be promoted by identifying complementarities in production structures among countries, strengthening the institutional and human capacities for the operation of subregional trading arrangements, establishing subregional trade information networks, and associating the private sector more closely with the integration process. There are potential gains for the LDCs in participating in the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP). LDCs should be encouraged to accede to GSTP and be provided with appropriate technical assistance to enable them to benefit fully from the system. Least developed countries should strengthen subregional, regional and interregional cooperation in order to benefit from economies of scale and to attract foreign direct investment more easily from developed and other developing countries. More attention should be given to promoting triangular cooperation and technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) as well as South-South joint ventures and economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) investment in these countries;

(e) The growth of a dynamic private enterprise sector requires an appropriate economic, fiscal and legal framework. Essential features of this framework are stable and predictable policies, tax, monetary and trade policies which ensure adequate incentives for investment, and a legal system which protects property rights and commercial contracts. These features are also needed to tap into international capital flows in the form of direct and portfolio investments;

(f) Enhancing human resources development is imperative if LDCs are to raise productivity, output and living standards. With the support of the international community, LDC Governments should intensify their efforts to raise education and training standards, promote life-long learning, improve the health status of their populations, and strengthen the status of women, by implementing appropriate policies in accordance with the provisions of the International

Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(g) To enable women in LDCs to play their full role in development, efforts should focus on legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies, and to involve women directly in planning, decision-making, implementation and development of macroeconomic and social policies, programmes and projects. Special initiatives and innovative schemes which can give women increased access to credit, training, information on marketing channels, as well as other support services, to alleviate the burden of their role as mothers and housewives, should be adopted;

(h) The economic policy strategies adopted by the LDCs should be consistent with the need to eradicate the chronic levels of poverty afflicting these countries, in particular by promoting the development of the private sector and entrepreneurship, by ensuring that all people have access to productive resources, and benefit from a policy and regulatory environment that enhances their overall capacities and empowers them to benefit from expanding employment and economic opportunities;

(i) LDC Governments are attempting to implement comprehensive structural adjustment reforms in very difficult circumstances, often in the face of severe administrative and financial constraints. Many of the constraints that they face are structural, deep-seated and not amenable to short-term solutions. Consequently, successful structural adjustment reforms require a government commitment to reform, and a medium-term to long-term perspective for implementation;

(j) In order to ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, the generation of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration, LDC Governments, in cooperation with the international financial institutions and other international organizations, should:

(i) Protect basic social programmes and expenditure, in particular those affecting the poor and vulnerable segments of society, from budget reductions;

(ii) Review the impact of structural adjustment programmes on social development by means of gender-sensitive social-impact assessments and other relevant methods, and develop policies to reduce their negative effects and improve their positive impact;

(iii) Further promote policies enabling small enterprises, cooperatives and other forms of micro-enterprises to develop their capacities for income generation and employment creation;

(k) Agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of ODA and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes,

and in this context, the proposal of the Government of Norway to host a meeting in 1996 among interested countries and representatives of relevant international institutions, with a view to considering how the 20/20 initiative can be applied operationally, is welcomed;

(l) Commitment of the LDCs and the assistance of the international community are essential components for the success of structural adjustment programmes. Without such support, the long-term objectives and the sustainability of the programmes will be jeopardized. In this regard, therefore, renewed commitments by the international community as defined by the Paris Programme of Action and other relevant instruments to support the efforts of the LDCs with adequate resources is vital.

III. EXTERNAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

39. The extremely low export capacity of LDCs, their very low level of export receipts, and the fluctuation and the resulting sharp limitation on their capacity to import, are the major structural constraints to developing LDC trade. This situation is more acute in the case of land-locked and island least developed countries, as their external trade is further impeded by high transportation costs.

40. Action by the international community, including increased technical assistance as foreseen in the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on Measures in Favour of LDCs, complemented by adequate financial support, can help LDC efforts to increase export earnings through increased production in both the traditional and the modern sectors of the economy, through diversification of the commodity structure and export markets, and thereby help to obtain better prices for their export commodities. It can also help LDCs to mitigate any adverse effects of the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements and to integrate themselves better into the international trading system. The interest of LDCs regarding the idea of considering the setting up of a "safety net" to help them cope with any such effects in the immediate and short term was noted. The Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, including the special clauses providing differential and more favourable treatment, and the decision on measures in favour of least developed countries, provide the institutional framework for these matters.

A

41. All provisions of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round should be effectively applied. In this regard, concrete action, as appropriate, should be taken, consistent with the Final Act, to fully and expeditiously implement the Marrakesh Declaration as it relates to LDCs, and the Ministerial Decision on Measures in Favour of LDCs, and to give effect to the Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food-importing Countries, with a view to enhancing LDC participation in the multilateral trading system, taking into account the impact of trade liberalization, and the relatively weak capacities of LDCs to participate in an increasingly competitive global market in goods and services.

42. Consideration shall be given to further improving GSP schemes and other schemes for products of particular export interest to LDCs, e.g. agricultural products, fish and fish products, leather and footwear, and textiles and clothing, through, where possible, the widening of product coverage; the reduction of procedural complexities, and the avoidance of frequent changes in the schemes. Consideration should also be given to a significant reduction in tariff escalation.

43. The rules set out in the various agreements and instruments and the transitional provisions of the Uruguay Round, including those relating to anti-dumping, countervailing duties, safeguards, and rules of origin, should be applied in a flexible and supportive manner for the least developed countries.

44. As for textiles and clothing, consideration should be given, to the extent possible, to permitting meaningful increases in the possibilities of access for exports from LDCs.

45. In the area of services, efforts should be directed at building and strengthening the efficiency and competitiveness of the weak domestic service sectors of the LDCs. Their participation in trade in services could be enhanced by effective application of article IV of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) with special priority given to LDCs. Furthermore, ways should be explored to facilitate LDC access to information technology and networks and distribution channels, and to give easy access to information to LDC service suppliers through contact points to be established, in accordance with GATS. It was noted that the movement of labour for the provision of services to other countries is an area of interest to LDCs.

46. Care should be taken so that domestic laws and regulations of importing countries in areas such as labour and the environment do not constrain the export opportunities of LDCs in a manner inconsistent with the Final Act of the Uruguay Round.

47. The home countries of foreign investment are urged to encourage investment in LDCs by taking appropriate supportive action.

48. South-South cooperation at the subregional and regional levels should be promoted to enhance regional and subregional trade by providing market access for LDCs by neighbouring countries. Appropriate measures should be taken to promote, support and strengthen trade initiatives of LDCs in subregional and regional groupings. Efforts of the LDCs to diversify their exports need to be supported so that their trading prospects become more viable. Such cooperation can be critical in complementing actions by LDCs and their development partners to attract foreign investment to LDCs. Measures should be taken to grant preferential access to the exports of LDCs on a non-reciprocal basis by developing countries under the GSTP, and also to augment resources, where appropriate, for promoting ECDC and TCDC through multilateral and bilateral institutions. Developing countries should, inter alia, introduce preferential schemes for LDCs under the GSTP.

B

49. Technical assistance should be refocused and wherever necessary intensified to help LDCs adapt to and take advantage of the new trading environment created by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. Common efforts of donors, international organizations as well as the LDCs themselves are needed in the implementation of the commitments undertaken and for maximizing the opportunities arising from the Uruguay Round agreements. Main areas of technical assistance in this regard should include:

(a) Enhancing institutional and human capacities to comply with the new obligations arising from membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) or to assist LDCs to accede to WTO, as well as to formulate and implement future trade policy;

(b) Developing and strengthening supply capabilities in relation to tradeable goods and services, and the competitiveness of enterprises;

(c) Improving the microeconomic trading environment and expanding the use of new communications technologies in the service of trade through the UNCTAD Trade Efficiency Programme;

(d) Enhancing the capability to make full use of GSP schemes;

(e) Supporting commodity diversification and marketing efforts;

(f) Expanding the trading and investment opportunities of LDCs, in particular, by identifying new trading opportunities which could be carried out, inter alia, through import promotion agencies by developed and other countries, developing an environment conducive to attracting foreign investment, and through advice and technical support.

50. With a view to achieving these aims, it is essential to eliminate duplication and strengthen cooperation between relevant international organizations, in particular UNCTAD, WTO and the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT, in order to conserve scarce resources and make full use of the existing and potential synergies among these organizations. Among the measures that should be considered is the establishment of a technical assistance fund administered by WTO in order to help LDCs participate actively in WTO.

IV. EXTERNAL FINANCE

51. The overwhelming dependence of LDCs on ODA is likely to continue during the rest of the present decade and beyond. The basic policy issues that the international community faces in this respect in the current climate of budgetary stringency and ODA scarcity, are: (a) how to improve aid allocations to the LDCs; and (b) how to enhance the quality and effectiveness of assistance to these countries. Donors need to expeditiously implement the agreed menu of aid targets and/or commitments as set out in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action and fulfil their commitments to provide a significant and substantial increase in the aggregate level of external support to LDCs, keeping in mind the

increased needs of these countries, as well as the requirements of the new countries included in the list of LDCs following the Paris Conference. The various provisions of the relevant resolutions adopted in the General Assembly in recent years, as well as the various relevant provisions adopted by recent major United Nations conferences, in particular the World Summit for Social Development, should also be taken into account, as adopted.

52. In view of the enhanced assistance capacities of a number of developing countries over the last few years, they should be invited to join the traditional donor countries in providing assistance to the LDCs.

53. The following measures and actions by donors can be highlighted:

(a) Specific measures to incorporate the agreed menu of aid targets and/or commitments as set out in paragraph 23 of the Programme of Action more explicitly into the national aid strategies and budgetary planning mechanisms of donors;

(b) Ensure adequate funding of the multilateral institutions and programmes which are major sources of financing for LDCs. Particular attention will have to be paid to replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) and the soft-term windows of the regional development banks, and other grant-based multilateral programmes. The relevant multilateral financial institutions are also invited to explore the possibility of tapping new sources of funds to help support LDC development efforts;

(c) Support United Nations development efforts by substantially increasing the resources for operational activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries as stated in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 48/162, while giving particular consideration to the special needs of LDCs as underlined in the programmes of action of major United Nations conferences organized since 1990;

(d) Continue to give high priority to LDCs in the operational activities of all parts of the United Nations system for development, bearing in mind UNDP Executive Board decision 95/23, in which it is stated that 60 per cent of UNDP programme resources in its future programming arrangement should be allocated to LDCs;

(e) Continue to provide financial support to adjustment programmes in LDCs on a timely basis and on terms adapted to the special needs and circumstances of LDCs, adequate external financing for the development and diversification of the productive sector, as well as additional support for poverty eradication, environmental conservation and social programmes;

(f) An increased level of technical assistance should be provided to LDCs and priority should be given to skill transfer, with a view to developing national capacity;

(g) Ensure the maintenance of mutual transparency and accountability in the management of aid resources by the aid officials of donor countries/ organizations and managers in recipient countries, as well as ensure the active

support of the donor countries/organizations towards the promotion of ownership of development programmes by the recipient countries;

(h) The international community should support the measures being taken in the LDCs towards the eradication of poverty. Increased resources should be made available from all possible sources, public and private, in this regard.

V. EXTERNAL DEBT

54. Many LDCs face serious debt problems and more than half are considered debt-distressed. The serious debt problem of the LDCs necessitate strengthened efforts on the international debt strategy. This strategy should include concrete measures to alleviate the debt burden and increased concessional financing, in support of appropriate economic policy measures, which will be critical to the revitalization of growth and development. Debt-distressed LDCs should benefit from substantial debt-relief schemes.

A. Official bilateral debt

55. (a) All donors that have not already done so are urged to implement Trade and Development Board resolution 165 (S-IX) by cancelling or providing equivalent relief for ODA debt as a matter of priority in such a way that the net flows of ODA are improved for the recipient. Those creditors still holding such claims, including non-OECD creditors, are urged to take similar measures;

(b) Adopt measures to substantially reduce the bilateral debt of the LDCs, in particular the countries of Africa, as soon as possible;

(c) Paris Club creditors are invited to continue to implement expeditiously and in a flexible manner the very concessional treatment under the Naples terms;

(d) Other non-Paris Club creditors are also invited to take similar measures in order to alleviate the debt burden of debt-distressed LDCs, including by setting up special debt-reduction programmes and debt-relief mechanisms.

B. Multilateral debt

56. In order to address the multilateral debt problems of LDCs, the Bretton Woods institutions are encouraged to develop a comprehensive approach to assist countries with multilateral debt problems, through the flexible implementation of existing instruments and new mechanisms where necessary. In this respect the Bretton Woods institutions are encouraged to expedite the ongoing consideration of ways to address the issue of multilateral debt. Other international financial institutions are invited to consider, within the scope of their mandates, appropriate efforts with a view to assisting LDCs with multilateral debt problems.

C. Commercial debt

57. (a) Invites creditor countries, private banks and multilateral financial institutions, within their prerogatives, to consider continuing the initiatives and efforts to address the commercial debt problems of the LDCs;

(b) Mobilize the resources of the Debt Reduction Facility of the International Development Association in order to help eligible least developed countries to reduce their commercial debt, considering alternative mechanisms to complement that Facility.

58. In accordance with the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development, techniques of debt conversion applied to social development programmes and projects should be developed and implemented.

VI. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING

59. It is important that UNCTAD, which is the focal point at the global level for the monitoring, follow-up and review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, has sufficient capacity and resources to follow up the outcome of the mid-term global review. In this regard, it is recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 49/98, invited the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session with a view to ensuring that the UNCTAD secretariat has sufficient capacity to undertake an effective follow-up of the outcome of the mid-term review as well as the follow-up of the conclusions and recommendations relating to LDCs adopted by major global conferences, as appropriate.

Part Four

STATEMENTS MADE ON THE ADOPTION OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

1. The representative of the United States of America said that at the Conferences held at Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, Member States had been developing a blueprint for economic, social and environmental action that recognized the important linkages among the various issues considered. Her country had been an active player in those conferences and was committed to being an active initiator of programmes and activities to fulfil the commitments made. Her delegation had come to the Meeting prepared to affirm the commitment by all to promote the full incorporation into the world economy of the least developed countries. Unfortunately, fulfilling that commitment became impossible when countries were constantly forced to redefine their commitments before the ink had dried on the most recent agreements. Both the initial document and the process by which countries were asked to redefine commitments recently made called into question the validity of those international conferences and summits.

2. With those concerns in mind, her delegation must make a number of reservations. The United States considered the Uruguay Round to be a historic achievement which had generated and would continue to generate global economic

growth and lead to more trade, investment, employment and sustainable development in all countries, including the least developed. It was carrying out its obligations under the Uruguay Round agreements, and expected others to do the same. With that in mind, the United States entered a reservation on the recommendation in paragraph 41, as it carried the clear implication that the United States was not implementing its commitments regarding the least developed countries. Moreover, the United States felt that the UNCTAD analysis of the Uruguay Round was both incomplete and inadequate. United Nations secretariats that did not provide value added to the work of the membership should be examined for their usefulness. Furthermore, the paragraph could be seen as an elaboration or expansion of Uruguay Round commitments, which her country could not support. The Uruguay Round decisions, including those relating to least developed countries, stood on their own with no need of elaboration or expansion. The only forum in which the United States could consider discussing those issues would be the World Trade Organization.

3. The United States must also enter a reservation on the recommendations in paragraphs 42 and 44. It attached the utmost importance to GSP, and considered it to be a key element in its commitment to assist least developed countries in fulfilling their responsibility to formulate and effectively implement appropriate policies and priorities that would lead to sustained growth. Similarly, implementation of the WTO agreement on textiles and clothing had created a process which would expand access to her country's vast markets. That would largely benefit developing countries, including least developed countries. Making the decision to open that sensitive domestic sector to increased competition had been a difficult one. However, the decision highlighted the firm conviction of the United States that a more open trading system was a benefit to all, including least developed countries. The paragraphs in question called for consideration of increasing access further to her country's textile and clothing markets for the least developed countries, beyond what had been agreed in the Uruguay Round, as well as for widening product coverage of GSP to include agricultural products, fish and fish products, leather and footwear and textiles and clothing, modifying the way the United States implemented its GSP programme, and also called for a significant reduction in tariff escalation. The United States could not agree to those paragraphs because it could not undertake a commitment to extend further liberalization to the products in question beyond what had been agreed in the Uruguay Round, or to alter the way its GSP programme was conducted.

4. The representative of the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed satisfaction that the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting had come to a very fruitful conclusion. The text adopted represented a candid statement of the performance of the international community in carrying out the Paris Programme of Action for the ~~Least~~ Developed Countries. It had been well known to all that the Paris Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries remained not only valid today, but just as valid as it had been in 1990.

5. The text of the Mid-term Review just adopted had enriched the Paris Programme of Action. It only remained for the international community, and particularly the donor community and the various international organizations, to ensure that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, and the

reflections made in the text of the Mid-term Review would find complete expression in fulfilling the targets and commitments embodied in that text. Equally, it was necessary to have an appropriate monitoring and follow-up mechanism, if only to refresh the mind on where matters stood in implementing the Programme of Action and the agreements adopted today. The decision to make reference to General Assembly resolution 49/98, and for UNCTAD to have sufficient capacity to undertake effective follow-up of the outcome of the Mid-term Review was sowing a seed for the immediate future that should make it possible to craft appropriate language concerning an effective mechanism.

6. The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, commended the fact that the Meeting had been able to reach a conclusion of the negotiations with a consensus from all delegations.

7. The representative of Cape Verde, speaking also on behalf of small island least developed countries, said that the fruitful conclusions achieved by the Meeting would not have been possible without the good working relationship that had been present among delegations. On behalf of small island least developed countries, he expressed thanks to the developed countries for the political commitment and willingness they had demonstrated during the Meeting.

CONTENTS (continued)

	Paragraphs	Page
E. Mobilization and coordination of organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system	44 - 49	14
F. Participation of the least developed countries in the preparatory process	50 - 53	16

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s 1/ were adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris in September 1990. In its resolution 48/171 of 21 December 1993, the General Assembly decided to conduct a mid-term global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, in accordance with paragraph 140 of the Programme and paragraph 7 (a) of its resolution 45/206 of 21 December 1990. In its resolution 49/98 of 19 December 1994, the Assembly decided to convene the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s in New York from 25 September to 6 October 1995 to carry out the review, to consider new measures as necessary, and to report to the Assembly on progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

2. The present report is in response to the requests addressed to the Secretary-General in resolutions 48/171 and 49/98 to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of these resolutions as well as to submit at the session a report on the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. Section II of the report contains an assessment of the outcome of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, and section III an account of the preparatory process for the mid-term global review.

3. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting adopted a decision requesting its Chairperson to submit the outcome of the meeting to the General Assembly for its appropriate consideration and action at its fiftieth session. The report of the meeting, including the full text of the Declaration, an assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level and progress in international support measures and recommendations adopted by the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, are being submitted separately in document A/50/745.

II. OUTCOME OF THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON THE MID-TERM GLOBAL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s

4. The High-level Intergovernmental Meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 26 September to 6 October 1995. It was preceded by a one-day meeting of senior officials on 25 September 1995, which addressed outstanding issues related to the organization of work of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting.

5. Over the early years of the 1990s, it became clear that the performance of the least developed countries as a group, fell far short of many of the objectives of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Against this background, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting adopted a Declaration and agreed on national and international policies and

measures in a number of key areas with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade.

6. Besides making an assessment of the socio-economic performance of the least developed countries in the early 1990s, the High-level Meeting also identified the salient constraints affecting socio-economic progress in the least developed countries. At the domestic level, policy-related constraints included macroeconomic imbalances, manifested in large fiscal and balance of payments deficits and, in many instances, the unfavourable short-term impact of macroeconomic policy adjustments on specific areas; structural or endowment-related constraints included lack of adequate physical infrastructure and poor performance of the productive sector; and country-specific constraints included civil strifes and recurrent natural disasters in some least developed countries and the resulting social and economic burdens. A number of external constraints were faced by the least developed countries, such as persistent debt and debt-servicing problems, the decline of the least developed countries share in world trade and their continued marginalization and the inadequacy of external finance.

7. The High-level Meeting also took note of the fact that despite the poor performance of the least developed countries as a group, nearly one quarter of least developed countries were able to attain positive per capita income gains in the early 1990s. Factors such as a strong expansion of agricultural production, internal stability, strong government commitments, a sound political and regulatory framework for development, complemented by significant external support, among other factors, have contributed to raising economic growth rates and have helped these countries to address some of the constraints facing their economies.

8. In the light of the recent performance of the least developed countries in the early 1990s and the factors determining such performance, the High-level Meeting defined the threefold challenge facing the least developed countries in the second half of the 1990s in terms of the need: to reverse the decline in economic and social conditions; to promote sustainable economic growth, development and structural transformation; and to avoid becoming further marginalized in the world economy. The policy agenda agreed at the meeting had a strong accent on the following areas: (a) a greater external orientation of the least developed countries' economies; (b) development of a dynamic private enterprise sector; (c) human resources development; (d) eradication of poverty; and (e) a renewed commitment to provide external support.

9. The mid-term review also stressed the importance of the ongoing policy reform process in least developed countries. While these reforms could not guarantee immediate results in lifting the major constraints facing their socio-economic development, nevertheless they provided a context in which growth and structural transformation could, in the long run, reinforce each other. Such symbiosis would require the establishment of a more favourable domestic and external policy environment. The domestic policy framework and the external support measures agreed at the meeting are aimed at creating such conditions.

A. Economic policy framework

1. Greater external orientation

10. A major thrust of the policy framework is imparting greater external orientation to the economies of the least developed countries. The Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations 2/ and the ongoing processes of globalization and liberalization have given further impetus to the evolvement of more open and liberal trading regimes.

11. High priority has been accorded within the overall policy framework to national policies and measures aiming: (a) to increase export earnings, including appropriate fiscal, exchange rate and trade policy reforms; (b) to diversify the composition of exports and facilitate their ability to exploit opportunities arising from the Final Act of the Uruguay Round; and (c) to strengthen supply capacities to adapt their economies to international competition in consequence of globalization and liberalization.

12. While the national policies of the least developed countries will bear by far the greatest burden of restructuring their economies, it is equally clear that they cannot meet these challenges alone. A series of external support measures have been agreed upon to complement national efforts. Such support relates primarily to the implementation of Uruguay Round agreements as they concern the least developed countries, viz., full and expeditious implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration as it relates to the least developed countries and the Ministerial Decision on Measures in favour of least developed countries, as well as giving effect to the Ministerial Decision on measures concerning the possible negative effects of the reform programme on the least developed countries and net food importing countries. The set of agreed measures at the mid-term review further spells out and, in some cases, goes beyond the provisions of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round. These include for example: (a) identification of the areas in which the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) schemes needed improvement; (b) enumeration of particular rule areas of concern to the least developed countries that should be applied in a flexible and supportive way; (c) a more explicit provision in the area of textiles and clothing; (d) a provision in the areas of trade and environment and trade and labour standards (these areas were not considered during the Uruguay Round); (e) elaboration of the main areas of technical assistance to the least developed countries; and (f) introduction of the notion of providing adequate financial support to complement technical assistance.

13. In addition, the outcome of the mid-term global review took note of two important concerns of the least developed countries: firstly, the setting up of a "safety net" to help them cope with any adverse effect arising from the implementation of the Final Act in the immediate and short term, and secondly, in the area of trade in services, the movement of labour for providing services to other countries. The question of possible components of a "safety net" was subsequently considered at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Ad Hoc Working Group on Trading Opportunities in October 1995, and it was noted that the elements of agreements in the area of trade reached at the mid-term review could be of relevance to the future work of the Working Group.

14. The assessment by the mid-term review as regards the external trade situation of the least developed countries and the policy actions agreed at the meeting reflect the overriding concern of the least developed countries, on the one hand, to operationalize transitional measures in consequence of trade policy adjustments warranted in the wake of the Uruguay Round Agreements, to tide over possible negative effects of the Final Act, benefit from its provisions and, on the other hand, the willingness of the international community to assist the least developed countries in this regard. It should be pointed out that to succeed in implementing this outward looking approach, the least developed countries and donors will not only need to give effect to the agreed national and external actions in the area of trade, but would also have to look beyond the confines of commercial policy. For example, various UNCTAD studies have pointed out that the sustainable export diversification, which involves not only greater earnings stability but also increased trade competitiveness, poses complex challenges besides the problem of low-level exports. Policy actions would have to deal with a number of related concerns, including those pertaining to market, policy, structural and endowment-related constraints that affect the export supply capacity of the least developed countries. Similarly, in implementing support measures in the area of external trade, the development partners would need to take a broader look, going beyond specific trade-related actions. Thus, development finance, adjustment support, investment promotion and technical assistance should play important roles in addition to measures to expand market access.

15. Moreover, increased South-South cooperation can help enhance regional and subregional trade and investment by providing market access to the least developed countries by neighbouring countries as well as in terms of attracting foreign investment. The mid-term review recognized the importance of such cooperation, and recommended that measures should be taken to grant preferential access to the exports of least developed countries on a non-reciprocal basis by developing countries under the Global System of Trade Preferences and also to augment resources, where appropriate, for promoting economic cooperation among developing countries and technical cooperation among developing countries through multilateral and bilateral institutions.

2. Fostering a dynamic enterprise sector

16. High on the policy agenda set out at the mid-term review is the need for strengthening existing policies and measures, including policy based incentives and new policies where necessary, for the promotion and support of the private sector, to be complemented with public sector investment. The growth of a dynamic private enterprise sector should be underpinned by an appropriate economic, fiscal and legal framework with the following essential features: stable and predictable policies; tax, monetary and trade policies that ensure adequate incentives for investment; and a legal system which protects property rights and commercial contracts.

17. These policies and measures should help the least developed countries tap international capital flows in the form of direct and portfolio investment. However, as the mid-term review meeting noted, although a large number of least developed countries have adopted national regulatory frameworks conducive to

foreign investment, they have not yet attracted such investment on a significant scale. To complement national efforts in this area, the meeting urged the home countries of foreign investment to take appropriate supportive measures to encourage such investment in the least developed countries.

18. It would be important to elaborate further and operationalize such support measures. The mid-term review already agreed that technical assistance would be provided to help developing an environment conducive to attract foreign investment. Other possible areas of support by the home countries could relate to supporting and improving investment guarantee schemes in order to underwrite some of the financial risks associated with investing in least developed countries, as well as providing fiscal and other incentives for investing in least developed countries. Flexible and supportive application of the various instruments and facilities promoted by multilateral financial institutions - such as World Bank's Expanded Co-financing Operations and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency - can offer important scope for least developed countries in augmenting foreign investment flows.

3. Human resources development and eradication of poverty

19. Improving productivity, output and living standards in the least developed countries greatly depends on enhancing human resource development. The efforts of the least developed countries to tackle key problems in human resources development have been well recognized, as also the difficulties encountered by them, particularly funding constraints. Broad guidelines of measures recommended in this area include: (a) intensifying efforts to raise education and training standards; (b) promoting life-long learning; (c) improving the health status of the population; and (d) strengthening the status of women.

20. As regards the role of women in development, policy measures should focus on enabling women to play their full role in development. These efforts should give greater attention to legislative and administrative reforms: (a) to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies; and (b) to involve women directly in planning, decision-making, implementation and evolution of macroeconomic and social policies, programmes and projects. Moreover, national policies on women in development should incorporate special incentives and innovative schemes that can give women increased access to credit, training, information on marketing channels etc.

21. While the Programme of Action placed emphasis on poverty reduction as an element of the policy framework, the mid-term review accorded to it a greater salience. Thus, the least developed countries are called upon to ensure that their economic policies and strategies should be consistent with the need to eradicate the chronic levels of poverty. The broad elements of an approach in this regard includes the promotion of private entrepreneurship such that all people have access to productive resources and benefit from a policy and regulatory environment that enhances their overall capacity and empowers them to benefit from expanding employment and economic opportunities.

22. At the same time, the structural adjustment programmes should include social development goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, the generation of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration. In specific terms, it has been agreed that Governments of the least developed countries, in cooperation with the international financial institutions and other international organizations, should: (a) protect basic social programmes and expenditure, in particular those affecting the poor and vulnerable segments of the society, from budget reductions; and (b) further promote policies enabling small enterprises, cooperatives and other forms of micro-enterprises to develop their capacities for income generation and employment creation.

23. The mid-term review meeting called upon the interested donor countries and least developed countries to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. In this connection, the meeting welcomed the proposal by Norway to convene a meeting in 1996 to consider how to apply the 20/20 initiative operationally.

B. External support

24. International solidarity in favour of the least developed countries, based on the principles of shared responsibility and strengthened partnership, was seen by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September 1990, as indispensable to the success of national policies of least developed countries. The mid-term review reaffirmed these principles and stressed that without external support the long-term objectives and the sustainability of national efforts would be jeopardized. A number of specific external measures were agreed upon in the following areas: external trade (discussed above); external finance; and external debt.

1. External finance

25. The overall donors' aid performance in the early 1990s fell short of the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action. In the light of this and against the backdrop of the current climate of budgetary stringency and scarcity of official development assistance, two major policy issues have been identified: (a) how to improve aid allocations to the least developed countries; and (b) how to enhance the quality and effectiveness of assistance.

26. Two salient considerations in regard to external financing are that the least developed countries are almost totally dependent on official development assistance, and that their overall external resource requirements have grown significantly with the increase in the number of least developed countries since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 1990. It was already pointed out in The Least Developed Countries 1990 report 3/ that the volume of aid resulting from the implementation of the menu of official development assistance targets and commitments in the Programme of Action would not be sufficient to meet fully the requirements of the then 41 least developed countries. It is now all the more important that this menu be expeditiously implemented and, simultaneously, additional measures be taken to augment the level of external resources to the

current group of least developed countries. From that standpoint, high priority should be given to implementation of actions such as explicit incorporation of the aid targets and commitments of the Programme of Action in the donors' aid budgets, increase in the level of concessional multilateral assistance, operationalization of additional flows to social sector, environmental conservation and eradication of poverty and enhancement of the value of aid through improving aid quality.

2. External debt

27. External debt and debt servicing is a crucial issue for the majority of least developed countries. That this serious problem should necessitate strengthened efforts on the international debt strategy was acknowledged at the mid-term review, and a number of actions were agreed upon in the areas of official bilateral debt, multilateral debt, and commercial debt.

28. As regards bilateral debt, actions by creditor countries are to be carried out along four principal axes: (a) cancelling or providing equivalent relief for official development assistance as a matter of priority through the implementation of Trade and Development Board resolution 165 (IX) by creditors (including creditors non-members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)), who have not already done so; (b) adopting measures to reduce substantially the bilateral debt; (c) continuing to implement expeditiously and in a flexible manner the very concessional treatment under the Naples terms by the Paris Club creditors; and (d) adopting similar measures by non-Paris Club creditors, including by setting up special debt-reduction programmes and debt relief mechanisms.

29. Comprehensive consideration of all aspects of multilateral debt of the least developed countries was facilitated by progressive evolution in the international community's thinking regarding this component of their debt. Analysis undertaken in international organizations and elsewhere suggests a variety of innovative approaches for dealing with multilateral debt. 4/ The mid-term review emphasized that the share of such debt in the long-term debt owed by least developed countries, as well as multilateral debt service, has increased considerably in recent years. To address this problem, the Bretton Woods institutions are encouraged to develop a comprehensive approach through the flexible implementation of existing instruments and new mechanisms where necessary. A particular reference has been made to the ongoing considerations of ways to deal with multilateral debt, and the Bretton Woods institutions are called upon to expedite such work.

30. As regards commercial debt, the creditor countries, private banks and multilateral financial institutions have been invited to consider continuing the initiatives and efforts to address this problem. One specific action agreed at the meeting is mobilizing the resources of the Debt Reduction Facility of the International Development Association (IDA) in order to help eligible least developed countries to reduce their commercial debt, as well as considering alternative mechanisms to complement this facility. Moreover, techniques of debt conversion applied to social development programmes and projects should be

developed and implemented in accordance with the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development of the World Summit for Social Development. 5/

31. Overall, the impact of these measures would depend, in the main, on the benefit that can be derived from the implementation of the Naples Terms, and the level of debt reduction that can be granted by new mechanisms being considered within the international financial institutions. While the Naples Terms are a welcome step forward, they can have a significant role in providing debt relief only if they are applied to a sizeable part of the total outstanding debt and if the debt stock reduction is extended to a large number of least developed countries. Moreover, as UNCTAD analyses indicate, even full implementation of the Naples Terms would not in itself be sufficient to bring down debt service ratios for many least developed countries. At the Halifax summit in June 1995 the Group of Seven countries signalled to the Bretton Woods institutions to develop a comprehensive approach to assisting countries with multilateral debt problems, and this point has been reflected in the outcome of the mid-term review on multilateral debt. Given that the multilateral debt burden of least developed countries has increased considerably and that little assistance has been available to help debt-distressed least developed countries in meeting their multilateral obligations, it is important to ensure that the scale of relief to be provided by the new mechanisms under consideration leads to a substantial reduction of such debt.

III. PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE MID-TERM GLOBAL REVIEW

32. The elaboration of the preparatory activities for the mid-term global review, including intergovernmental, expert, sectoral and inter-agency preparatory meetings and the substantive documentation, was initiated by the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board at its spring session in 1994, in accordance with paragraph 18 of General Assembly resolution 48/171. Subsequently the General Assembly in its resolution 49/98 decided on the preparatory process, notably to convene the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Donor Countries and Multilateral and Bilateral Financial and Technical Assistance Institutions with Representatives of the Least Developed Countries (Donor-Recipient Meeting) to prepare for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. Main responsibility for the preparatory process was assumed by UNCTAD in its capacity as the focal point for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action and its follow-up at the global level. Substantive preparations were also undertaken at the regional level, and other parts of the United Nations system likewise contributed to the process, as described below.

A. Action by the Trade and Development Board

33. The fourth annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action was conducted by the Trade and Development Board during the second part of its fortieth session in April 1994, and the fifth annual review similarly during the second part of the forty-first session of the Board in March 1995. Background for the Board's deliberations was provided by the 1993-1994 6/ and 1995 4/ issues of The Least Developed Countries report prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat. In addition to analysing the socio-economic

performance of the least developed countries, their policy reform efforts, and trends in trade and external support for these countries, the 1993-1994 report reviewed the special issues of education and health care in the least developed countries, and the 1995 report reviewed, performance in the productive sectors. The 1995 report was prepared with a view to serving also as the basic background document for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the mid-term global review. Consequently, it took a retrospective look at the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action since its adoption in 1990, analysing the difficulties encountered in sustaining development in the least developed countries. Upon the Board's request, an addendum to the 1995 report was subsequently prepared, containing an update to that report notably on external support measures, as well as further analysis of least developed countries' growth experience undertaken in response to a request by participants during the Donor-Recipient Meeting. 7/ The 1995 report was further complemented by a statistical profile on the least developed countries. 8/

34. At its April 1994 session, the Trade and Development Board adopted decision 412 (XL) on the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the mid-term global review, inter alia, submitting a series of recommendations to the General Assembly on the preparations for the meeting. It also adopted agreed conclusions 413 (XL) on the review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action. At its March 1995 session, the Board reviewed the status of preparations for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, besides undertaking the annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Board adopted agreed conclusions 423 (XLI) on these two agenda items. It recommended making available to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting a comprehensive assessment of the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and set out a number of elements and priority issues to be taken into account in such an assessment. The Board, moreover, in an annex to agreed conclusions 423 (XLI), submitted recommendations to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the agenda and organization of work for the meeting.

B. Preparatory expert group meetings

35. As part of the preparations for the mid-term global review, the UNCTAD secretariat organized a series of issue-oriented expert group meetings. The first such meeting was held at Niamey in January 1995 and was devoted to the role of women in the development of the least developed countries. The meeting was organized with the financial support of the Government of Norway, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It adopted a Declaration to bring to the attention of the international community the special problems faced by women in least developed countries and the need to adopt urgent measures to enhance their full participation in the development process of least developed countries, both as agents and beneficiaries. Detailed recommendations for priority action to this end focused on education, health, participation of women in the productive sector in the least developed countries and the incorporation of women's concerns in mainstream development. 9/

36. A second expert group meeting, on fiscal policy reforms in the least developed countries, was convened at Geneva in March 1995. This meeting was organized with the financial support of the Government of the Netherlands. The expert group discussed different options available in the field of tax reforms and explored ways for raising revenue in these countries. The report of the meeting sets out the main conclusions and policy implications emerging from the deliberations, including with regard to the general context for fiscal policy action of Governments of least developed countries and the implementation of tax reforms and capacity-building. 10/

37. Moreover, an expert group meeting on trade diversification in the least developed countries was organized at Geneva in April 1995, with the financial support of the Government of Italy. The experts at this meeting examined the potential for trade diversification in least developed countries, constraints to diversification and the required national and international support measures. They adopted a number of conclusions and policy recommendations, which, inter alia, stressed that sustainable diversification in the least developed countries pose complex challenges that went beyond the domain of commercial policy. The achievement of trade diversification in the least developed countries would require concerted multilateral and national effort, designed in particular to alleviate supply-side constraints; in the absence of that, the trade position and economic weight of least developed countries would remain marginal. 11/

38. Issues of external finance, debt and trade were the subject of a special high-level panel, with the participation of distinguished specialists in these fields, organized during the Donor-Recipient Meeting in May 1995. The objective of the panel was to provide innovative ideas and recommendations for the consideration of the Meeting. Specific proposals were put forward notably concerning a debt strategy for the least developed countries. The new opportunities for South-South cooperation emerging with the dynamic growth experience of a number of developing countries, were also emphasized.

C. Preparations at the regional level

39. Regional meetings to prepare for the mid-term global review were organized by the relevant United Nations regional commissions in accordance with paragraph 4 (c) of General Assembly resolution 49/98, and the substantive inputs provided through the preparatory process at this level were transmitted to the Donor-Recipient Meeting in May-June 1995 and to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting itself.

40. A mid-term review of the implementation of the Programme of Action in the Asian and Pacific region was undertaken by the Special Body on Least Developed and Land-locked Developing Countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) at its second session held at Bangkok in April 1995. The recommendations of the Special Body on measures to strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action as well as the substantive issues to be addressed in the regional input to the mid-term global review were subsequently endorsed by the Commission at its fifty-first session through resolution 51/9. This resolution, the report of the Special Body and an

overview of economic growth and social development of the least developed countries in the Asian and Pacific region in the early 1990s were made available as ESCAP's input to the Donor-Recipient Meeting in May-June 1995. A subsequently revised contribution was transmitted to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. 12/

41. Progress achieved by the African least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action was reviewed by the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, which convened for the thirtieth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of Ministers in Addis Ababa in May 1995. The Conference of Ministers adopted a special memorandum on the mid-term global review, reflecting the African position on the issues before the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and containing, inter alia, a number of proposals on measures for the accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action. The Conference of Ministers also adopted resolution 797 (XXX) on the accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action in African least developed countries during the second half of the 1990s. In accordance with this resolution, the Special Memorandum as well as the report prepared by ECA reviewing the economic and social situation of the African least developed countries during the first phase of the implementation of the Programme of Action, 1990-1994, were transmitted as ECA's contribution to the mid-term global review. As further input, ECA also contributed a review of the external resources situation and debt of African least developed countries. 13/

D. Donor-Recipient Meeting

42. The Meeting of Governmental Experts of Donor Countries and Multilateral and Bilateral Financial and Technical Assistance Institutions with representatives of the least developed countries (Donor-Recipient Meeting), which was held at Geneva from 29 May to 2 June 1995, constituted the main event in the preparatory process leading up to the mid-term global review. The Donor-Recipient Meeting examined a number of priority issues as set out by the Trade and Development Board at its March 1995 session, notably developments in the world economy since 1990 as they affected the growth and development performance of least developed countries; lessons learned from adjustment and macroeconomic and policy reforms; the challenges posed by globalization and liberalization as well as the implications of the Uruguay Round for the least developed countries; and the provision of official development assistance and debt relief during the early 1990s and the implications of the enlargement of the list of least developed countries for international support measures.

43. The Donor-Recipient Meeting had before it two papers submitted by the Acting Chairman of the Special Sessional Committee of the March 1995 session of the Trade and Development Board, prepared to facilitate consultations at the Meeting pursuant to paragraph 7 of agreed conclusions 423 (XLI). The first of these documents contained a draft assessment of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level and of progress in international support measures, and the second, possible recommendations covering a number of key areas of concern for the least developed countries. The documents were considered by a Working Group set up by the Meeting. The

Donor-Recipient Meeting agreed to transmit the text subsequently elaborated by the Working Group as a contribution to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. 14/

E. Mobilization and coordination of organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system

44. As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General has continued to take requisite steps to mobilize and coordinate the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations in the implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action, as well as to ensure appropriate preparations for the mid-term global review. Moreover, agencies have responded to the specific requests for preparatory activities addressed to them by the General Assembly, e.g., by undertaking sectoral appraisals and submitting special reports as inputs to the mid-term global review.

45. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions reporting to the Administrative Committee on Coordination, regularly reviewed the implementation of the Programme of Action and, in particular, the preparations for the mid-term global review. Substantive inter-agency consultations were held in response to the request by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 (e) of its resolution 49/98, on the basis of a report prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat, during the inter-sessional meeting of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (sixth session) in New York in May 1995. At this occasion, Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions member organizations, inter alia, reiterated that the least developed countries remained a priority objective for supportive action by the United Nations system. It was also emphasized that the system, in its programmes and operational activities, must maintain a strong international advocacy role in favour of the least developed countries, including in resource mobilization, and must assist Governments of least developed countries in the strengthening of national administration, management capacity and infrastructural development. The views expressed by participants on the issues before the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting were communicated to the Donor-Recipient Meeting, which was simultaneously in session in Geneva. 15/

46. Agencies have reported regularly on their implementation of the Programme of Action, notably in response to an annual questionnaire on follow-up to the Programme issued by UNCTAD. They have also provided specific inputs to the annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, e.g., collaborating with the UNCTAD secretariat in analysis of key sectors and special topics for the Least Developed Countries Report. Some of them have undertaken sectoral appraisals of their own in accordance with paragraph 140 of the Programme of Action and General Assembly resolutions 45/206 and 49/98. Such appraisal has been undertaken on a regular basis, notably by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which has organized a series of ministerial-level symposia on the industrialization of the least developed countries. The first two were held in November 1991 and December 1993, with a third symposium scheduled for November-December 1995. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its part prepared a review of the least developed countries and the challenge to social

development as a contribution to the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in March 1995.

47. A number of agencies submitted special reports reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action within their respective fields of competence, in response to paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 48/171 and paragraph 9 of Assembly resolution 49/98. These were made available to the Donor-Recipient Meeting and to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting together with the contributions from the regional commissions. 16/ Agencies also contributed to the preparatory process for the mid-term global review in other ways, e.g., by providing support for and participating actively in expert groups and other preparatory meetings.

48. The UNCTAD secretariat collaborated closely with other agencies to ensure appropriate preparations for an in-depth mid-term global review, undertaking intensive consultations notably with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the relevant regional commissions during the preparatory process leading up to the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting. As regards UNDP, its Executive Board at its second regular session of 1995 in April considered matters relating to the least developed countries. The Administrator of UNDP in this context reported on the efforts made to address the special needs and priorities of the least developed countries. In its decision 95/12, the Executive Board, inter alia, requested UNDP to assist in providing the necessary support to the preparations for the mid-term review of the Programme of Action (see below). Another important provision concerning the least developed countries is contained in decision 95/23 by the annual session of the Executive Board in June 1995 on successor arrangements to the fifth programming cycle. The Executive Board, recognizing the continued priority given to the least developed countries in resource allocation, decided to allocate 60 per cent of UNDP's programme resources to the least developed countries. 17/

49. Pursuant to paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 48/171, the particular needs and requirements of the least developed countries have also been taken into account by recent major meetings and conferences of the United Nations system. Principle 7 of the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994 18/ thus states that the special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly of the least developed countries, shall be given special priority. The Programme points to funding and capacity-building as two key areas to be addressed specifically with regard to the least developed countries. The Declaration adopted by the World Summit for Social Development held at Copenhagen in March 1995 acknowledges the critical situation particularly of Africa and the least developed countries, and in Commitment 7 sets out a number of measures to accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of these countries. The Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995 19/ for its part stated that adequate financial resources should be committed at the international level for the implementation of its Platform of Action in the developing countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries. Issues relating to human settlements in the least developed countries will be addressed in the context of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which is to take place in Istanbul in June 1996. 20/

F. Participation of the least developed countries in the preparatory process

50. The least developed countries participated actively in the preparatory process for the mid-term global review, notably through participation in expert group meetings, preparations at the regional level and taking an active part in the Donor-Recipient Meeting in May-June 1995. Least developed country participants, inter alia, prepared a number of case-studies, which formed part of the background documentation for the expert groups. Substantive preparation of and the attendance of least developed country participants at expert group meetings was made possible through the financial support of bilateral donors and multilateral funding sources, as indicated above. Following decision 93/18 of the UNDP Governing Council, in which the Council requested UNDP to assist in providing the necessary support to the preparations of the mid-term review and in mobilizing funding for the participation of least developed countries, and in accordance with decision 95/12 of its Executive Board, UNDP made available a contribution of $160,000, which was used notably for enabling the participation of representatives of the least developed countries in the Donor-Recipient Meeting. The participation of the least developed countries in the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting itself was covered under the arrangements decided upon by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 of its resolution 49/98.

51. The possibility of the least developed countries to participate in the annual review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action undertaken by the Trade and Development Board have been limited by lack of funding. In the absence of regular funding arrangements for this purpose, least developed countries' attendance has so far largely depended on the provision of extrabudgetary resources, which have tended to dry up in recent years. A few donor countries did however provide such support, enabling in particular an informal exchange of views held during the April 1994 session of the Board on country-level experience with the implementation of the Programme of Action, with the participation of a number of ministers and high-ranking officials and experts from least developed countries. This significantly contributed to a constructive dialogue with development partners and a strengthening of the review exercise.

52. The least developed countries continued to consult among themselves on the implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action and on the preparations for the mid-term global review. A meeting was thus held between ministers and heads of delegations of least developed countries participating in the Trade and Development Board session in April 1994; they issued a statement on progress in the implementation of the Programme, underscoring the importance of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting and adequate preparatory activities. The ministers of the least developed countries meeting in New York later in 1994 during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly considered in depth the preparations for as well as the substantive issues before the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, and on 4 October 1994 adopted a declaration on these issues. 21/ Ministers of least developed countries also undertook missions to donor capitals during the months preceding the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting in order to sensitize the donor community at the highest political level about the needs and problems of the least developed countries.

53. At the national level, the consultative and aid group and round table processes have provided the backbone for implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action, as well as important inputs for the global review process. The World Bank and UNDP acted as lead agencies providing support for these country review meetings. During 1994 and the first 10 months of 1995, 14 consultative and aid groups and 14 round table and similar meetings were convened by 24 least developed countries, while a number of others were in the process of preparing such consultations. Altogether, close to 70 country review meetings for least developed countries have been organized since the adoption of the Programme of Action. This has represented a major substantial effort by the least developed countries to implement policies in line with the Programme of Action and to improve the effectiveness of external resource use.

Notes

1/ Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

2/ See Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994 (GATT secretariat, Sales No. GATT/1994-7), vol. 1.

3/ TD/B/1289 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 91.II.D.3).

4/ See, for instance, The Least Developed Countries 1995 report (TD/B/41(2)/4 and Add.1, UNCTAD/LDC(1995) and Add.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 95.II.D.2)), and Trade and Development Report, 1995 (TD/B/42(1)/15).

5/ A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

6/ TD/B/40(2)/11, UNCTAD/LDC(1993) (United Nations publication, Sales No. 94.II.D.4).

7/ TD/B/41(2)/4/Add.1, UNCTAD/LDC(1995)/Add.1.

8/ TD/B/LDC/GR/6.

9/ TD/B/LDC/GR/2.

10/ TD/B/LDC/GR/1.

11/ TD/B/LDC/GR/3.

12/ TD/B/LDC/GR/Misc.1/Add.4/Rev.1.

13/ TD/B/LDC/GR/Misc.1/Add.5, parts I to III.

14/ TD/B/42(1)/9, TD/B/LDC/GR/5 and TD/B/LDC/AC.2/2.

15/ ACC/1995/11, paras. 12-17.

16/ Issued as addenda to TD/B/LDC/GR/Misc.1. Apart from ECA and ESCAP, the following agencies submitted reports: Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, ILO, IMF, ITC, ITU, UNCHS (Habitat), UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UPU, WHO and WFP.

17/ Earmarkings for the 48 countries currently on the list of least developed countries amounted to 58 per cent during the fifth UNDP programming cycle. Over the period from 1990 to 1993, the least developed countries' share in total UNDP expenditure recorded as official development assistance amounted to some 37 per cent.

18/ A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1.

19/ See A/CONF.177/20.

20/ See further "Compendium on special measures in favour of the least developed countries adopted since the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries" (TD/B/LDC/GR/7), prepared as background document for the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting, which also sets out special provisions on least developed countries adopted by other major meetings and conferences of the United Nations system. See also TD/B/LDC/GR/Misc.1/Add.8 and TD/B/LDC/GR/Misc.1/Add.9. Special events on least developed country issues were arranged in connection with some of these meetings, e.g., at the World Summit for Social Development.

21/ The least developed countries have also consulted among themselves on issues of special concern to them at other major meetings and conferences of the United Nations system.